Painting and Theatre in Kashmir

Suraj Tiku's Journey



Dr. Ramesh Tamiri

Suraj Narain Tiku was a master artist, a creative set designer and a passionate lover of theatre. A warm-hearted extrovert Tiku had zest for life and great sense of humour.

Born in 1929 at Srinagar in Kashmir Suraj Tiku had his training in fine arts from the prestigious art school, Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute. A gifted artiste Tiku learnt initial techniques in stagecraft from the redoubtable Kashi Nath Bhan, and was later trained at New Delhi by then leading set designer HV Sharma and the noted director Col. Gupte. Suraj Tiku's versatile talents in the genres he practiced make him an eloquent symbol of fusion between painting and theatre.

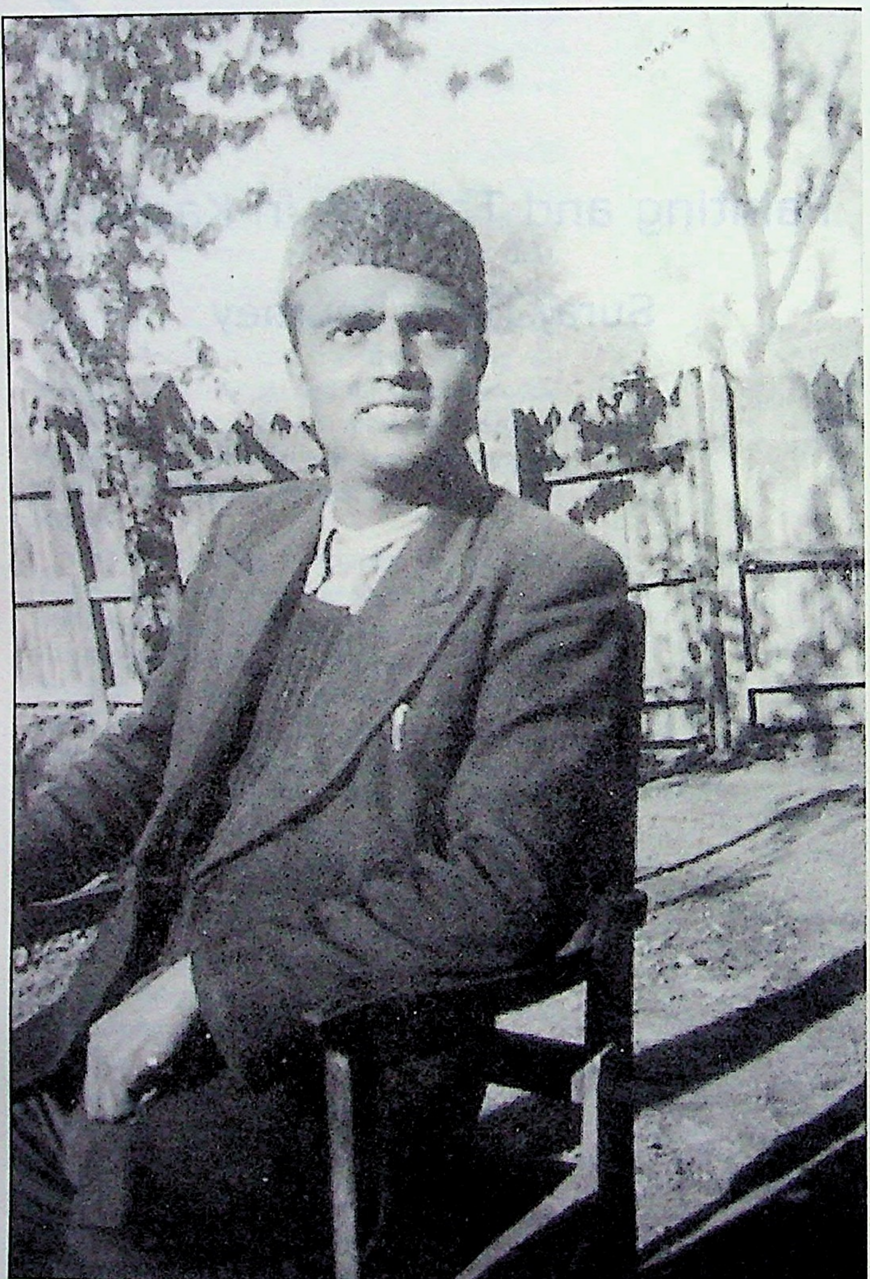
In this exciting biography Dr. Ramesh Tamiri charts out Suraj's evolution as an artist and his accomplishments in the field of fine arts and performing arts. Based on extensive research the book succeeds in projecting Suraj Tiku as Kashmir's foremost painter and actor. This is a unique book that blazes a new trail in subaltern cultural historiography. It focuses on one individual and his teacher as part of reconstructing the spirit and great flowering of talent in visual arts and performing arts in a regional setting. The author has adopted the narrative mode in which he interweaves eyewitness accounts of other contemporaries to create an engrossing narrative.

By providing the historical backdrop to Suraj Tiku's emergence as a versatile artist and actor the book provides a fund of information about the history of painting and theatre in Kashmir during the last one hundred and fifty years.

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Suraj Tiku (1929-1997)

Painting and Theatre in Kashmir
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DR. RAMESH TAMIRI

Foreword by

PROF. RATAN PARIMOO

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Dedicated to my parents

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Foreword

I feel privileged to write the foreword for *Painting and Theatre in Kashmir: Suraj Tiku's Journey*, authored by Dr. Ramesh Tamiri who is passionately interested in the art and culture of Kashmir.

A cultural and creative outburst took place in Kashmir soon after India won independence in 1947. As a school and college student in Srinagar from 1948 to 1951, I was witness to the social ferment and the creative urges among many youngsters around me. I chose visual images as the expression of my creativity and joined the Faculty of Fine Art of the M. S. University at Baroda. I was the first Kashmiri to join this infant institution at the age of fifteen. At Habba Kadal, where I lived, I was known to make portraits of Kashmiri Pandit women (*batanis*). I had no direct involvement with the cultural developments in the valley which found expression in the mushairas, the theatre halls, art exhibitions and through the Kashmiri,Urdu and Hindi writings. Summer vacations brought me closer to the whiff and fragrance of all this.

The mass migration of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990 has made us realize the significance of the period starting from 1948 when along with several Kashmiri Muslims many Pandit youngsters were enthused by art.

Creativity, Rabindranath Tagore says, overflows like the lava bursting out of a volcano. Society's discontent can result in creative upsurge to get concretized in masterpieces of art. The other route is political anarchy and unwarranted violence. The creative upsurge in Kashmir is only a few decades old. Recounting it through documentation of individual geniuses and their specific masterpieces gives rise to both amazement and disbelief. Were they the real people who created high quality and masterly works?

I was amazed while going through the meticulously researched book of Dr. Tamiri. In the first place I pat him for his intense and sustained interest in the post-independence cultural upsurge in Kashmir, particularly in the fields of theatre and art, and the contribution of the persistently committed artist Suraj Tiku to theatre and painting. Because of Tiku's contribution to painting and theatre, the author has dealt with the history of both these genres during the last one hundred and fifty years. The task has been accomplished by the author intelligently. As pointed out by him, Suraj Tiku's teacher Kashi Nath Bhan had collected the pamphlets and brochures of the dramas enacted 1940 onwards, but that valuable treasure was lost due to the forced displacement in 1990. The author has put together and recorded the material as 'oral history', taking recourse to this tedious method necessary in research.

Dr. Tamiri unfolds his vast canvas by a historical coverage of painting in Kashmir beginning with the mention of Kashmiri painters in Akbar's court followed by the Kashmiri traditional painters working in Punjab, Himachal and Kashmir during the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The author refers to the western painters who arrived in Kashmir to paint landscapes in the nineteenth century. That helped in the setting up of the Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute in 1913 which introduced the methods of European naturalism of figure drawing, modelling with light and shade, making portraits in oil colour and doing 'on the spot' open-air landscapes of scenic beauty in transparent watercolours while sitting directly in front of the location. Several Kashmiris like Kampassi, Sapru and Walli mastered the British watercolour technique of landscapemaking. Som Nath Khosa excelled in handling oil colour for portraiture, in bust-size as well as in life-size. This was the stage when modern art coincided with India's independence, the aftermath of the Pakistani invasion and the new cultural fervour around 1948. It is significant that the same year, SH Raza, a member of Bombay Progressive Group, visited Kashmir and influenced the trio: SN Bhat, Triloke Koul and PN Kachru. The author has ended this chapter with short notes on a few other artists covering the subsequent decades.

My interactions with Triloke Koul, Santosh and Kachru began in Srinagar in May 1952. Santosh belonged to a family given to papiermâchié and had mastered Kashmiri traditional skills of design and craftsmanship. Triloke Koul, PN Kachru and SN Bhat (whom I also met subsequently during vacations) were surprised how this youngster had out of the blue taken admission at a degree level art school, and thus Triloke Koul promptly joined Baroda in July 1953. Ghulam Rasool Santosh received Govt. of India's Cultural Scholarship and arrived in Baroda in 1954 to study under NS Bendre as a non-collegiate student. For the next few years we three Kashmiri students shared the same room. In 1956 we, along with other young artists of Gujarat, were among the founder members of the first Baroda Group of Artists led by our guru Prof. NS Bendre. All of us had been trained by him. Triloke returned to Srinagar in 1957, and in 1960 Santosh decided to try as a freelance artist in Delhi. Kishori Koul, Gayoor Hassan, Bhushan Koul, Avtar Koul and Shuban Kaw are some of the students who arrived at Baroda during the years I was teaching after I had returned from London in 1963.

My interest in theatre was aroused in the forties by my schoolmate Moti Lal Kemmu. My elder brother Girdhari Lal (whose elder son Lalit is currently involved with theatre and T.V. acting at Mumbai) and I were part of his team and acted in his dramas.

In 1948, 1949 and 1950 we enthusiastically watched the staging of Samaj Sudhar Samiti's plays enacted at Sheetalnath. At that time there was also a movement of social reform.The connection between the theatre activities and this movement has been shown by Dr. Tamiri very well. In sixties Kemmu and I met again in Baroda when he came there to study theatre at the Faculty of Performing Art.

The chapter on theatre activities in Kashmir must have been a tough job for Dr. Tamiri, for he has pieced together bits of information and arranged them in a logical order.He has made a significant observation that Kashmiri society for the most part of the medieval period remained devoid of any involvement with performing arts, although the danceforms of Hafiza and Bhand Jashn

survived. The Pandit attempt to interrelate to the ethos of the rest of the country is reflected in the manner the nineteenth century Kashmiri poets, Swami Paramanand and Krishan Joo Razdan, danced in costumes while reciting Radha Swayamvara and Shiva Lagan. During the early 20th century, under the influence of Raas Mandlis of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, Raas and Ram Leela were transformed into Kashmiri style and performed before audiences. Amateur Dramatic Club was established for staging plays in Urdu. Far more significant was the foundation of the Kashmir Theatrical Company by a group of talented and professional Kashmiri Pandit artistes. Two names are prominent among them: Madhav Dass and Ved Lal Dhar Vakil. Dramatic clubs were started in educational institutions like S.P. College. The important moment was in 1944 when the members of the theatre clubs joined hands with Samaj Sudhar Samiti to establish the Natak Vibhag so that social issues could be reflected through the theatre. The plays of Natak Vibhag, both in Hindi and Kashmiri, were staged at Sheetalnath and watched by Kashmiri families. The Samaj Sudhar Samiti laid a good impact on Kashmiri Pandit society those days.

I vividly remember having enthusiastically sat through several stage performances between 1948 and 1950. I also recall a young poet, Triloki Nath Vaishnavi Rafiq, who sang his poem during the short break when the curtain was drawn for changing the scene. The refrain of his song was : *me na sa kuni kun lagan chhoo dil, kasibas nether banan mushkil* (I can't concentrate; a skilled craftsman is not given a daughter in marriage). 'Kasib' refers to Kashmiri Pandit musician, theatre actor, painter. It also implies 'illiterate'.

Dr. Tamiri has rightly pointed out that this was the 'moment' for Kashi Nath Bhan, who was the director of most of the plays. This chapter further details the theatre activities and describes the individuals associated with the Natak Vibhag, Kala Kendra, Cultural Front of the IPTA and Bhand Paather. He has also listed the Kashmiri plays written for the stage by Ali Mohammad Lone, Dina Nath Nadim, Pushkar Bhan, Hari Krishan Kaul, Moti Lal Kemmu, Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din and others. The unforgettable opera *Bombar Ta Yembarzal,* written by Dina Nath Nadim, was performed in 1956.

The author has devoted a full chapter to Kashi Nath Bhan who was an excellent painter, set designer and competent director. He was the teacher of Suraj Tiku whose talent Bhan spotted and made use of. Bhan was an intelligent student, who after passing his Matriculation, completed his Diploma in Fine Arts from the Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute in 1920. He served at Anantnag till 1940 but shifted to Srinagar as he was appointed Instructor at Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute. Bhan is recognized among the pioneers in Kashmir theatre movement who had been active since 1930s. Several of his students became good professionals and the most outstanding was Suraj Tiku.

In the chapter on Suraj Tiku the author has narrated the saga of how he, trained as a painter, also emerged as a creative set designer and talented stage actor. Having lost his father while still a toddler he grew up in the prevailing joint family system. However, due to economic hardships he could not pursue higher education and joined the Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute after passing Matriculation in 1945. He began as an art teacher in Hoshiarpur but later returned to Srinagar, took up teaching of drawing in the state education department and then joined the Song and Drama Division. Finally he joined the School of Designs where Triloke Koul was the Director. Tiku mastered portraiture in oil and landscape painting in watercolour.Eventually he painted Kashmir scenes on canvas and then moved towards abstract forms. However, from 1967 he concentrated on set designing, and became a worthy successor to his mentor Kashi Nath Bhan as a set designer. He is reputed to have been very innovative and quick in execution. The two-year training in Delhi under Rama Rao and Col. Gupte was crucial in Tiku's growth. Some of his sets for plays staged by Kala Kendra are memorable. In spite of such a wide range of talent, Dr. Tamiri observes, acting was Suraj Tiku's real passion. He acquired theatrical skills through self-learning as he acted in many of the plays staged by Sudhar Samiti and Kala Kendra. Many of his contemporaries remember him for his tremendous sense of humour.

The last two chapters document several stage actors from the Tiku family which is quite unusual in the Kashmiri Pandit society. In the end Dr. Tamiri has included notes and references besides several appendices. The rare photographs of artists, actors, of Suraj Tiku, of scenes from the plays and the reproductions of the paintings of Suraj Tiku enrich this book.

The book is an encyclopedia of art and theatre in Kashmir during the last one hundred and fifty years. It is a brilliant example of subaltern cultural history. It focuses on one individual and his teacher as part of reconstructing the spirit and the great flowering of Kashmiri talent in visual arts and performing arts. The author has adopted the narrative mode in which he interweaves eyewitness accounts of other contemporaries. The style is engrossing and lucid. Kashmiri Pandits, especially of my generation, will feel both nostalgic and proud while going through the narrative. I congratulate Dr. Ramesh Tamiri for the meticulous work that he has produced.

Vadodara
September 2009

Ratan Parimoo

Acknowledgements

Among the many people who made this book possible I would first of all like to thank Santosh Tiku and other members of Tiku family for their sincere co-operation.I am immensely grateful to the contemporaries and fellow artists of Suraj Tiku who provided me a good deal of information which brought Suraj alive for me. I express my thanks to Moti Lal Kemmu for giving me valuable insights into Kashmir's regional theatre. Kashmiri Khosa, Moti Lal Raina and Prof. Maharaj Krishen Raina provided me with useful information about Som Nath Khosa and Shiv Nath Raina. I am grateful to them. I would like to thank Bansi Lal Dalal who talked to me candidly about his uncle Kashi Nath Bhan and also arranged his photograph.

Santosh Tiku, Chaman Lal Churangoo, Krishen Langoo, Kashmiri Khosa, Triloke Koul, Bihari Kak, Asha Zaroo, Ashok Zafrani, Moti Lal Raina, Prof. Maharaj Krishen Raina and Ramesh Gurtoo arranged the photographs for me. I am indebted to them. Despite his busy schedule Prof. Ratan Parimoo agreed to write the foreword and Prof. Arvind Gigoo offered many suggestions. I owe them a debt of gratitude. I thank Secretary, J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages for permitting me to reproduce the painting *Horses*.

I thank Upender Ambardar, Kuldeep Raina, Omkar Kachru and Rajinder Tiku for their help.

My mother Brij Mohini, wife Bharti, son Achin and nephew Amitesh Dhar supported me throughout.

Dr. Ramesh Tamiri

Preface

Srinagar witnessed unprecedented cultural upsurge in the first half of the twentieth century. The small area from Amira Kadal to Fateh Kadal was the hub of cultural activities. Painters, musicians, directors, set designers, actors and playwrights who came from that area wrote a new chapter in the history of fine and performing arts.There was hardly any family from Dadi Kadal to Khardori and from Badiyar to Chinkral Mohalla, that was not in one way or the other associated with music. In families like those of Madhav Dass, Som Nath Khosa, Moti Lal Kemmu, Shiv Nath Raina, Prem Nath Pardesi, Madhov Lal Tikoo, Ved Lal Dhar Vakil and Ghulam Rasool Santosh, second or even third generation continued to carry the family legacy of fine arts, performing arts or music. The establishment of Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute in 1913 and the visits of Raas Mandli groups to Kashmir were behind this cultural effervescence.

Till the closing years of the nineteenth century the only form of painting Kashmiris knew was miniature painting. Though leading British painters regularly visited Kashmir from 1846 yet they failed to enthuse the local painters to take up modern techniques in art. But European instructors under the directorship of FH Andrews trained the early batches of Kashmiris in modern techniques in landscape and portrait painting. Every Kashmiri artist of eminence before 1947, with rare exceptions, had remained an alumnus of Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute. Suraj Tiku was among the last students to graduate from it. With its closure after 1947 Kashmiris interested in the fine arts got training from the Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda.

Since the last decade of the nineteenth century Raas Leela Mandli groups from UP and Punjab had been visiting Kashmir. These would present the incidents from Lord Krishna's early life and his experiences with friends and others. Besides drama, Raas Leelas had a series of

dances known as *nritya*. Raas Leelas created the first impulse among the Kashmiris for the modern theatre. Ram Leelas, conducted during the Dussehra celebrations by the Punjabis in Kashmir, further exposed the Kashmiris to techniques in acting.

Equally important has been the impact of the Parsi Theatre in the emergence of the modern theatre in Kashmir. Early dramatic clubs not only followed the techniques of the Parsi Theatre but also staged the plays written by noted playwrights like Aga Hashar Kashmiri, Narayan Prasad Betab and Radhey Shyam Kathavachak. Ved Lal Dhar Vakil and Kashi Nath Bhan were fully conversant with the Parsi Theatre. Suraj Tiku was among those Kashmiri artistes who knew Parsi Theatre. It is doubtful if the Parsi Theatre companies ever visited Kashmir but Alfred Theatre Company came to Jammu in early 1921. Soon after this Amateur Dramatic Club was launched in Srinagar.

Parsi Theatre (1873-1930) picked up new elements from the European theatre and gradually replaced the parameters of classical Sanskrit plays. This theatre used European-style proscenium with richly painted backdrop curtains and interesting stage effects. It depended on spectacle and melodrama to create appeal. Aga Hashar Kashmiri was one of the pioneers and promoters of the Parsi Theatre. He gave a different style to dramawriting, and his dialogues were delivered by the actors in a specific manner. His plays depicted contemporary reality and touched emotional dimension too.

The idea to write a biography of Suraj Tiku emerged out of my research work into painting and theatre traditions of Kashmir. Two masters, who were actively associated with both these traditions, were Kashi Nath Bhan and his student Suraj Tiku.Despite their contribution to painting and theatre in Kashmir, they remain unknown not only at the national level but also at the state level. Of Kashmir's artists only two are known at the national level—Som Nath Khosa for prolifically painting Gandhi, and Ghulam Rasool Santosh for his tantric style of painting. This work is an attempt to present the stories of Kashmir's master painter, set designer and a stage artiste, Suraj Tiku and his illustrious teacher, Kashi Nath Bhan, to a wider audience.

Suraj Tiku came from a family of performing arts. His sons, Santosh and Ravi, uncle Madhov, and cousin Tej were actively involved in Kashmir's theatre. Tej's daughter Shweta is a budding artiste and journalist.

Working on this biography posed some problems and constraints. There was absolutely no source material on Suraj and his teacher Kashi Nath Bhan. I had to rely entirely on the interactions I had with Suraj's friends and others who worked with him. Santosh, Suraj's son, helped me by furnishing rare details about his father and arranged interviews with people who had worked with his father. He had retrieved the family album, many of the paintings done by his father and some of his personal papers. He gave me the old theatre brochures also which proved to be of immense help in reconstructing Suraj's life as an artist.

Kashi Nath Bhan had carefully preserved all the theatre brochures, written material and the photographs of the performances presented by the Kashmir Theatrical Company, Karan Dramatic Club and Natak Vibhag of Sudhar Samiti. All this was in the custody of his nephew Bansi Lal Dalal. This treasure was lost when Dalals had to abandon their home in Kashmir in 1990.

Since the objective of this work is to introduce Suraj Tiku to a wider audience the two sections situate his story in a broader perspective. The introductory section seeks to apprise the readers of the painting and theatre traditions of Kashmir in a historical frame, with special focus on the last one hundred and fifty years. It also presents the original research material on Suraj's teacher Kashi Nath Bhan. The last section pertains to the role of the members of the Tiku family in performing arts. Except for the first two introductory chapters, for which the notes and references have been appended at the end, the entire work is based on oral history. It is hoped that the present work would acquaint the readers with Suraj's immense capabilities as a versatile artist of Kashmir.

Dr. Ramesh Tamiri

Jammu
February 2010

Suraj. He came from a family of performing arts. His sons, Santosh and Ravi, uncle Madhav and cousin Taj were accomplished in Kashmir's theatre. His daughter Shree is a budding artiste and painter.

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Jammu
February 2010

Dr. Ramesh Tashna

"Truth, whether in Art or Science, must be the standard to which all opinions and judgements must ultimately be referred"

— James Duffield Harding

Part One

PAINTING IN KASHMIR—A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Kashmir had its own distinct school of painting. Since very little archaeological work has been done and few paintings have survived no chronological history of painting in Kashmir has been possible.

Early specimen of prehistoric art is available in the form of a neolithic specimen of drawing, discovered at Burzahom, depicting a hunting scene. A similar specimen of this period has also been traced at Bomai (Sopore). Excavations have yielded painted tiles from Harwan,[1] Hutumar, Shikargah (Tral), Gufkral, Donipather and Kutbal. Excavated stucco figures from Ushkur indicate the existence of good art in Kashmir.[2]

Nilamata Purana, a 6th-7th century Mahatmaya, refers to the prevalence of painting in ancient Kashmir. Lama Taranath, who wrote *History of Buddhism* in 1608 AD, makes clear mention about the Kashmir School of Painting. He writes, "In Kashmir too there were in former times followers of the old Western School of Madhyadesa, later on a certain Hasuraja founded a new school of painting and sculptures which is called the Kashmiri School."[3] Mirza Haidar Dughlat, who visited Kashmir in 1644, in his memoir *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* talks about wall paintings in Hindu temples.[4]

Kashmir had been exporting its art from very early times. From 7th to 8th century Kashmir art received the influence of Gandharan and Gupta art. This continued till the 12th century.

Early Tibetan mandalas, the mystical diagrams of the cosmos that conveyed religious messages, were most likely of Kashmiri origin. Earliest specimens of painting that have survived include Gilgat manuscript

paintings of the 6th and 7th centuries. Benoy Behl, who recently photographed old murals in different Tibetan and Ladakh monasteries, has thrown further light on Kashmiri dimension of Western Tibetan art.[5] Great Tibetan scholar Rinchen Zangpo (958-1055 AD) from Guge visited Kashmir in 975 A.D. He carried with him Kashmiri craftsmen and painters to build 108 temples in Western Tibet as part of an effort to re-establish Buddhism in this region. There is an oral tradition in Tabo (Spiti) that says that thirty-six Kashmiri painters had accompanied Zangpo. One among these famous painters was Bhidhaka. The Kashmiri painters decorated these monasteries with painted images of Bodhisattvas. The murals of the Buddhist monasteries of Alchi (Ladakh), Mang Nang (Western Tibet) and Spiti (Himachal Pradesh) attest to the artistic excellence achieved by Kashmiri artists.[6] These mural paintings look like pictorial translation of the exquisite Kashmir bronzes, executed from the 9th till the11th century. There is a 12th century illuminated manuscript in which two coloured fragments represent the important Buddhist figure Prajnaparamita. The fragments, whose deep brilliant colouring remains intact, allow the viewer to appreciate their exuberant design and impressive 3-D effect.

Venetian traveller Marco Polo, who visited Kashmir in the 14th century, found samples of velvet paintings in Kashmir.[7] He took these to Europe and introduced velvet painting there.

During the Sultanate period when all genres of art lost state patronage, references about good painters come only occasionally. Mulla Jamil, a poet and musician, who sang beautifully in Persian, was a painter at the court of Sultan Zainul-Abdin Budshah. Prof. Mohibbul Hasan, the author of *Kashmir Under Sultans* says Budshah had a rich library which housed illuminated manuscripts and paintings. This library is said to have perished in a fire during the reign of Sultan Fateh Shah.[8]

MUGHAL SCHOOL OF PAINTING

During the Mughal period the tradition of illuminated manuscripts and manuscript paintings picked up. Barbara Schmitz, the author of *Émigré Artists of Kashmir* (1585-1660), suggests that it was from Kashmir, an entrepot for artists from India, Persia and Central Asia that Mughal painting, based on European examples of volumetric figures and recessional space, was first introduced to the Persian court at Isfahan

and to the Central Asian court at Bukhara. Many Mughal paintings were the joint effort of Indian and Persian artists, with one person making the drawing, the other colouring it and the third filling the details in the painting.

Kashmiri artists formed the second largest group in Akbar's atelier. A gifted calligrapher among these was Muhammad Husayn who was conferred with the title Zarrin Qalam.[9] Abul Fazal says that he surpassed even his master Maulana Abul Aziz. Others rate him equal to Mulla Mir Ali. Samples of Husayn's work—gilded and illuminated—survive in the Lytton Library, Aligarh. Husayn has been immortalised by his distinguished student Manohar. On the colophon of *Gulistan Sa'di* (1184-1292) Manohar drew a portrait of his teacher.[10]

Other distinguished Kashmiri artists who worked at Akbar's court included Kamal Kashmiri, Haider Kashmiri, Muhammad Kashmiri, Ismail Kashmiri and Yaqub Kashmiri. During the same period Ali Chaman and Muhammad Murad Shirin Kalam were well-known calligraphers. Two other distinguished Kashmiri artists, who worked at the Mughal court, were Salih Kashmiri (1598) and Daud Kashmiri (1610). Muhammad Nadir Samarkandi, who served the Imperial Court in 1651, was not a Kashmiri. He had spent many years in Kashmir. Elements of Kashmir landscape dominate some of his work.[11]

Mughal emperors loved Kashmir and treated it as their garden. They would bring reputed painters with them to paint scenes in Kashmir. Mansur accompanied Jehangir in 1620. He was commissioned to depict more than 100 Kashmiri flowers during his visit. During this visit many of the paintings in Hari Parbat were restored. In 1607 Jehangir had got a large Himalayan Markhore painted by his accompanying artist.

In the last quarter of the 17th century many Kashmiri artists sought refuge in the adjoining hill states, particularly Himachal Pradesh. One such clan, headed by Pandit Seu Raina, laid the foundation of Pahari School of Painting.

In the 18th and 19th centuries many Kashmiri Pandits took this art to Punjab (Amritsar and Lahore), Jaipur and Lucknow. Abdul Halim Sharar in his monograph on Lucknow mentions a talented Kashmiri Pandit calligrapher Munshi Sarbsukh (pupil of Hafiz Nurullah) and another artist Mansa Ram. During this time hundreds of émigré Kashmiri Pandits had taken to calligraphy.

A painting titled *Village Life in Kashmir* is in the British Library. It is dated 1760 and has been done in opaque watercolour by the artist, Mir Kalan Khan, in Lucknow style. It bears distinct European influence. On its border the artist has inscribed in Persian: *majlis-i-Kashmir, amal-i-mir kalan* (A Kashmir assembly, the work of Mir Kalan).

MINIATURE SCHOOL OF PAINTING

Kashmir Miniature School of Painting has produced master painters. Of these Tota Ram Naqqash and the three generations of a Koul family nicknamed *Tota* are better known. Tota Ram Naqqash was the brother-in-law of Mukand Ram Gurtoo (1831-1897), the founder of the Mitra Vilas Press and the newspaper *Akhbar-i-Aam*. Naqqash was a bachelor and lived the life of a recluse in a rented room in Wachhowali, Lahore. After his death his paintings were kept with the Gurtoos. However, with the break-up of the joint family in the first quarter of the 20th century some paintings came into the possession of Bal Krishna Gurtu who preserved them with great care. In July 1947, when riots broke out in Lahore, Bal Krishna's son Santosh was able to retrieve the paintings from the burning house. As part of homage paid to the memory of Tota Ram, Santosh Gurtoo published an album of nine paintings of Tota Ram.[12] It is not known what happened to the paintings which were shared by other members of the Gurtoo family. The nine paintings are:-

1. *Shaarika Bhagwati, the presiding deity of Kashmir: Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh and the nine grahas invoking her blessings.*
2. *Vishnu at the Sheshnag, the halt before Panchatarni on way to Amarnath Cave.*
3. *Six-handed Shankar and Parvati, the latter with folded hands, celebrating Herath, Shivratri. Shankar is holding two vatkus (earthen pots) full of walnuts for distribution among the devotees. Parvati is the first devotee.*
4. *Panchatarni, the last halt before the Amarnath Cave.*
5. *Rishi Markandaya giving sermon to a devotee.*
6. *The Guru performing yagya : A disciple reciting the Veda.*
7. *Rishi Markandaya explaining the fundamentals of dharam to a ruler.*
8. *A young yogi giving sermon to an elderly sadhu.*
9. *Flower Work.*

TOTA CLAN

The three generations of the Koul family called *Totas*—Hardas, Daya Ram and Raja Ram[13]—were active in Lahore in the 19th century. Raja Ram and Daya Ram were artists-cum-calligraphers of very high calibre. They illustrated several Persian manuscripts. Raja Ram was a calligrapher in Kohinoor Press, Lahore. Besides being an artist he was a good Persian writer as well. He illuminated, painted and transcribed *Zafarnama* (1856), *Gulgashat-e-Punjab* (1864), besides *Gulabnama* and *Gulzar-e-Kashmir* written by Dewan Kripa Ram. An illustration in *Zafar Nama* shows Maharaja Gulab Singh in conversation with Sardar Jawaher Singh. Some of the good miniatures drawn by Raja Ram include *Vamanavatar, Narsimhavatar, Sita in Captivity in Ashokvatika and Ravana Trying to Woo her to become his Queen, Varahavatar* and *the Battle of Kurukshetra.* Raja Ram also worked on *Raagmala* (1873).[14]

Daya Ram Tota did illustration of *Pothi Maha Shiv Puran* by drawing paintings of *Ganapati, Panchmukhi Shiva with Panchmukhi Parvati, Shiva Parvati* and *Ganesa with Parvati Combing the Hair of Shiva.*[15]

Many Kashmiri miniature artists did not sign in the colophon and preferred to remain anonymous. However, some names have come down to us. These include Devi Koul known as Devi Koul Kashmiri and Devi Sahai. He painted *The Avatara Charitavali* (1897-1927). Gadadhara of Rainawari drew *Visnu on Sesa.*[16]

There are two main features of Kashmiri miniature paintings, viz, complete lack of interest in portraiture and wide range of colours.

We don't have much information about miniature artists who resided in Kashmir and painted in the second half of the 19th century. Two artists, Narayan Kachru alias Murtgar and Vasudev Gariyali, were quite active in this period. Dr. Shashi Shekher Toshkhani has identified five other Kashmiri artists who were involved in miniature painting. Kachru, who was the greatgrandfather of the artist Kishori Koul, has drawn a portrait of his guru, Swami Parmanand. Miniatures painted by him include *Sharika, Tripurasundari* and *Omkareshwara in Sahasradara* and *Panchyatana Gods Celebrating a Wedding Scene in the Family.* Garyali's best and only surviving work is his huge painting of Amresvara Siva on a wooden board. This painting was made on the basis of the description given in eight slokas by Mukand Ram Tikoo, preceptor of Krishan Joo Razdan, Kashmir's celebrated devotional poet. Possibly, the portrait of Mukand Ram Tikoo

was also drawn by Gariyali. Painters of the portraits of Saint Jeevan Shah, Reshi Peer and Hakim Shri Bhat remain unidentified. Sham Lal Khah of Mattan is perhaps the only artist who still pursues the art of miniature painting in Kashmir.

In the British Library and India Office Library, London, there are four drawings[17] made by an artist who is unidentified. These include:

- *Priest and Worshippers at the Shiva Temple, Srinagar.*
- *Preacher and Worshippers at the Wooden Mosque of Shah Hamadan, Srinagar.*
- *Muslim Procession 'to Ward off Sudden Misfortune.'*
- *A Kashmiri Box Maker at Work With his Tools.*

The same artist made many drawings and picture maps of Ladakh. He also did extensive miniature work to illustrate the books *Vaki'at-i-Kashmir* by Muhammad Azam Didamari, *Divan*-i-*Hafiz* and *Yusuf Zulaikha* by Jami. The artist did this work between 1764 and 1801.

BRITISH ARTISTS

With the founding of the J&K State under Maharaja Gulab Singh the British artists of repute started visiting Kashmir regularly. They painted landscapes and portraits. Prominent British artists whose paintings have reached us include James Duffield Harding, William Carpenter, William Simpson, Mary Popham Blyth, Charles J. Cramer Roberts, Capt. Molyneux, Florence Parbury and Lambert. The British artists have left behind a rich visual record of Kashmir landscapes and of Kashmiris.

Till the visit of William Moorcraft in 1823 no Englishman had entered Kashmir. Thomas Moore, who immortalised Kashmir in his *Lalla Rookh*, never visited Kashmir but recorded description of Kashmir's majestic beauty only from early accounts. Raj literature of the 18th and 19th centuries carries references to Hafizas (Kashmiri nautch girls) and their superb performances.[18] The artist William Simpson was so charmed by one such performance in Srinagar's Shalimar Garden that he compared it to a scene straight from *Lalla Rookh.*

EARLY DRAWINGS

The early drawings on Kashmir are by Hugel (1832), Vigne (1842), Charles Stewart Hardinge (1846), Thomas Machell (1854-1855) and J.Needham (1858).

Hugel's famed drawing is *A Remarkable Suspension Bridge at Uri*

(p. 174).[19] Vigne's drawings and sketches are titled : *Payech, View on the Jehlum in the Interior City of Kashmir-Looking up the Stream, Char Chinar-Looking North* (It shows the pavilion which is no more extant), *Masjid of Deodar at the Entrance of the Valley by the Shopian Road, Distant View of Srinagar Lying Between the Fort and Shankaracharya Hill* and *Martand.*[20]

Charles Stewart Hardinge (1822-1894) made a drawing titled *Mosque of Shah Hamadan, Srinagar, and Kashmir* in 1846. There is a view that this drawing was made by Henry Warren for the lithograph, *City of Kashmir—Mosque of Shah Hamadan*, published in CS Hardinge's *Recollections of India* (London, 1847), plate 23. It was copied from the original watercolour by CS Hardinge.

Journal of T. Machell, Travels in Hindoostan, the Punjab, Scinde and Kashmir (1854-1855) carries 25 drawings by Thomas Machell. The drawings deal with ancient temples at Pandrethan, Avantipur, Payech, Bumzuv and Martand.

J. Needham made eight tinted lithographs on Kashmir in1858, on the basis of drawings of Mrs. H. Clark. The lithographs, displayed in the British Library, are titled:-

- *Palace and Part of the Fort Srinagar*
- *View of the City and Jama Masjid from Hari Parbat*
- *Bridge over the Jehlum in the City*
- *Baba Reshi*
- *Ancient Temple on Takht-i-Suleman*
- *View of Hari Parbat from the 7th Bridge*
- *Temple of the Sun, Martand*

A painting titled *Hindu Festival in Cashmere* in the British Library and numbered 1363, depicts the earliest view of Kheer Bhawani at Tulamulla. In style this drawing resembles drawings of Needham. Other drawings made by Mrs H.Clark, which form part of her book *Summer Scenes in Kashmir* include *Cottage Residences for British Officers on the River Jehlum, Ziarat of Shah Hamadan, The Kashmir Lake from Naseem Bagh* and *View of the Wullar Lake from the Slope of Gulmarg Mountain.*

PORTRAITS

Kashmiri miniature artists did not lay stress on good portraiture. Mature portraiture came with the British artists. James Duffield Harding (1798-1863) made a portrait of Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1847, a year after the signing of the Treaty of Amritsar. Another painting depicts Sheikh Imamdin, Ranjaur Singh and Dewan Dina Nath. Sheikh Imamdin

was Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Governor in Kashmir. From style it seems it had been done by Harding who was a good landscape painter as well and authored *The Principles and Practice of Art.*

There are some more portraits in British Library, London, but the names of the artists are not mentioned. These include *Maharaja Gulab Singh on Throne (1846)*, *Maharaja Gulab Singh on Horseback* and *Maharaja Ranbir Singh.* Val. C. Princep has drawn a sketch of the famous Hafiza Begoo in *Imperial India—An Artist's Journal*, London (1879). Princep was closely involved with Pre-Raphaelite Movement. FP Knott painted Maharaja Hari Singh with his cabinet.

WILLIAM CARPENTER

William Carpenter, a noted British portrait artist visited Kashmir in 1850 to make paintings for the Royal Academy. For his paintings he chose the titles

- *Cashmere Women Buying Vegetables on the Banks of the City Lake*
- *Girls Gathering Water Lilies*
- *Kashmiri Nautch Girls Seated on a Verandah Overlooking a Lake and Mountains*
- *Panditanis Buying Vegetables on the Banks of City Lake*
- *Pavilion in Shalimar Bagh*

WILLIAM SIMPSON

William Simpson, popularly known as William Crimean Simpson, Great Britain's watercolourist and an ethnographer, visited India twice—first in 1859 and then in 1875 with the entourage of the Prince of Wales. He sketched the architecture, archeological findings and daily life of the people from the Southern plains to Nepal and Tibet.

Simpson was also Britain's earliest and the most celebrated war artist correspondent. Notable events covered by him include the Crimean War (1854), opening of the Suez Canal (1869), the marriages of the Russian Tsars in the late 19th century, Franco-Prussian War (1870), Barricades of Paris Commune (1871), etc. Besides war, he covered State events, coronations and funerals, and drew the sketches of Kashmir Maharajas. Adrian Lipscomb calls his greatgrandfather, Wiliam Simpson, "The Prince of Pictorial Correspondents."[21]

On Kashmir the four excellent paintings of Simpson available to us are:

- *The Return Visit of the Viceroy to Maharaja Ranbir Singh at Sialkot, 09-3-1867*
- *Shawl Making Family in Cashmere Shawl Manufactory (1867), chromolith*
- *Pir Pantsal Pass*
- *The Lake (Dal) of Kashmir (1893)*

There is a painting in India Office Library, London, which shows Kashmiri shawls being washed on a river bank. This painting is dated 1867 and was commissioned for the Paris Universal Exhibition. It is not known who painted it. There is another painting of Mar Canal (1855 Srinagar). It carries no reference to the artist who painted it. Dr. Andrew Leith Adams of Army Medical Staff painted Markhore in watercolour in 1854.

MARY POPHAM BLYTH

Mary Popham Blyth was in Kashmir in 1866 and brought out an album of fifty-eight drawings in watercolour, pen and ink wash in1868. The cover of her book has a drawing which depicts European travellers with local porters. Her watercolours on Kashmir include:

- *A View of Jehlum River in Srinagar with the Shah Hamadan Mosque and Merchant Houses Overlooking the River*
- *A View of the Dal Lake and Hari Parbat Hill*
- *Self-Portrait, Camping in the Buildings of Pari Mahal*

Mary Popham Blyth also painted Martand ruins, Bijbehara, Anantnag, Khanabal, Palhalan, Char Chinar, A River Ghat in Srinagar, Residency, Shankaracharya Hill, Chaplain's Bungalow, A Side Street, View from a Houseboat, Wullar Lake and Mansbal Lake.

There is a set of beautiful paintings executed in 1867 but the name of the artist is not clear. The painted scenes include Jehlum in Bijbehara, Mughal Road, Chenab, Shah Hamadan Mosque, Hari Parbat, Jammu Fort, Banihal Pass, Purmandal, Shopian Fort, Wullar, Udhampur and Rope Bridge.

GEORGE W. HAYWARD

George W. Hayward (1839-1870) published an album of six drawings including five landscapes of Kashmir. The drawings pertain to Burzil Pass, Village of Kutnoor in Khag, Scene between Noushera and Baramulla en route to Srinagar with the river Jhelum and Tilel mountains in the distance, Harmokh mountain above Bandipore on the Wullar

Lake and Scene near Kailgai looking towards the Chilong Pass, Zanskar with the Nunkun Glaciers in sight.

JOHN RUGGLES

John Ruggles (1827-1919) brought out an album of 25 drawings of landscapes in Kashmir, the Punjab States, Bhutan, Gwalior, Lucknow and South India. Themes of sketches on Kashmir include Martand Temple, Shalimar Garden on the Dal Lake, Gulmarg, Dak Bungalows at Uri and Garhi. Ruggles drew these in 1873.

CHARLES CRAMER ROBERTS

Charles Cramer Roberts was a British Army officer. The collection of his paintings preserved in India Office Library, London, is dated 1886. Cramer painted temple ruins (Buniyar, Pandrethan, Martand and Wangat), Springs (Verinag and Achabal), Mansbal Lake, Srinagar city, Sind Valley, Lidder Valley and Shamsbari Range. He also visited Jehlum Valley Road and Mughal Road to paint Sikh Forts, Domel, Rajouri, Pir Pantsal, Poshiana and Aliabad Sarai. Cramer did forty-nine watercolours on Kashmir.

CAPT. MOLYNEUX

Towards the closing years of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century Capt. Molyneux and Florence Parbury visited Kashmir. Sir Francis Younghusband published Molyneux's sixty-eight watercolours in his book on Kashmir in 1908. Molyneux's watercolours have a wide range. Besides painting routine subjects, he covered Spring in Kashmir, Spring floods, Sunsets on Jhelum, Wullar Lake and Dal Lake, Lull before the Storm in a Kashmir Lake, Gangabal Lake, Erin nullah, Kutkol Canal, Chenar Bagh, Mar Canal boats, and the Market. He also visited Gurez and Kazinag to capture them in watercolours.

FLORENCE PARBURY

In 1909 Florence Parbury published *The Emerald Set with Pearls: Being Reminiscences of the Beautiful Land of Kashmir*, with watercolours painted by her. She had visited Kashmir in 1902. Parbury loved Kashmir and authored *Songs from Lalla Rookh*, set to music jointly by G. Zuccoli.

'E. E'.

A set of paintings is in the form of postcards. These are titled *Six Artistic Views of Kashmir.* The paintings were done in 1910. The painter has given his initials as 'E. E' and was probably based in Peshawar. The paintings are titled :

Entrance to the Dal Lake, Ferozepore Nullah, Hari Parbat, Irrigation Dal Lake, Kralyar Canal, Temple Chenar Bagh.

Another set of paintings, done in 1910, shows Lidder Valley, Residency, Shah Hamadan Shrine, Shankaracharya Hill, Srinagar, Srinagar Fort, Srinagar Palace, Srinagar Lake, Srinagar View, Nala Mar and Lake Views. The artist's name is not known.

LAMBERT

Lambert, a British artist, did some good paintings on Kashmir in 1920. These include *The Third Bridge in Srinagar, Chenar Bagh,* and *Maharaja's Palace in Kashmir.*

A non-British painter, HA Mirza painted *Residency* in 1920.

KASHMIRI PAINTERS

MAHESHWAR NATH DHAR (1888-1971)

Maheshwar Nath Dhar was a superb portrait painter of Kashmir in the 20th century. There was hardly any middle class family in Srinagar which did not have a portrait painted by him.

He learnt painting in Gwalior, where he worked as a draftsman in State Public Works Department from 1902 till 1910. On his return to Kashmir he held an exhibition of photographs, portraits, spiritual paintings on different *mantras* of the goddesses Uma Devi, Ragniya, Tripurasundari and Shailputri (Baramulla). These portraits of the goddesses were installed in various temples. He also made portraits of Devi for Devibal temple, Anantnag and Amritshwara Bhairava.

Impressed with Dhar's artistic talent Maharaja Pratap Singh appointed him as a Royal Artist. He was allotted a studio in the palace which overlooked river Tawi. [22]

Dhar began his work by restoring and reshaping old paintings in the palace. Many of the paintings on the walls had decayed. He also drew portraits of Maharaja Pratap Singh and of his ancestors, the Dogra Royal Family. Dhar's painted work is on display at the state museum in Srinagar.

When Dhar retired in 1925 he shifted to his private residence at Banamohalla. In 1935 the then Prime Minister, Gopalswamy Ayyengar utilised his services to renovate the Martand ruins. Dhar's paintings still survive in the houses of some Kashmiri Pandit families. These include *Lord Amritesvara Bairava* and *Tripurasundari.*

Ganjoo family in Talab Tillo, Jammu, has a painting drawn by MN Dhar. It depicts 3-headed Siva with Parvati on a lotus. The head of the family is seen bowing before Lord Shiva.

Artist Mohan Raina once said:

"If I ever go into heavens, I will ask about Maheshwar Nath Dhar, the famous Royal artist."

SIR AMAR SINGH TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

Founding of the Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute was a turning point in the history of modern art in Kashmir. It helped the native youth to learn modern techniques in painting under reputed art instructors. This school produced students who later made their name either as painters or designers. Some students like Sat Lal Kampassi and Jagar Nath Mattoo subsequently served as permanent faculty members here. This art school would not charge any tuition fee from the students. The institute was affiliated to The City and Guilds Institute, London, which conducted the examinations. Amar Singh Technical Institute enjoyed good prestige among the art schools in British colonies.

At the initiative of Sir Aurel Stein and the then British Resident in Kashmir, Stuart Fraser, the Government of Jammu & Kashmir started Technical Institute in Srinagar in 1913. For Stein there was no better person other than his friend Fred Henry Andrews to head it. Andrews had remained Vice-principal of Mayo School of Art in Lahore in 1890. He was an expert in handicrafts and industrial designing. Andrews' abilities as an artist were profound. He was quite sympathetic to traditional Indian handicrafts. He had also served as Head of the Art Department at the East London Technical College and Director of the Art Department at the Battersea Polytechnic. [23]

In early 1913 the J&K Government offered Andrews the directorship of the Technical Institute at a salary of Rs 1000 per month. His excellent rapport with the European and state officials helped in the steady development of the Institute. Andrews' efforts bore fruit when curricula status was granted to industrial crafts in education. He left Kashmir in 1923.

Jyotish Chandra Mukerjee, Royal Academician, was another distinguished principal of the Technical Institute. He is well remembered by his students, Keshav Malik, PN Kachru and others. Polite to a fault Mukerjee was always eager to teach even strangers. He shunned publicity. He was a good artist, better in portraits than in landscape painting.

PN Kachru, an artist, says about the Technical Institute: "It was through this institution that the ideas of Bengal Revivalism penetrated into the local society."[24] The rich library at the Institute included books and imprints by EB Havell, Abanidranath Tagore, Nand Lal Bose and Rabindranath Tagore. The institute's major contribution was that it gave a place of respectability to the artists and painters.

SAT LAL KAMPASSI (1898-1987)

Sat Lal Kampassi hailed from Banamohalla locality of the Habba Kadal area. His father Vishnath was the first native photographer of Kashmir. He had started his studio in 1893. The printing press of the family named Vishnath Press was functioning in Srinagar till 1990.

Sat Lal Kampassi had his initial training in art at the Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute before he moved to Calcutta. For six years Kampassi remained a student of Abanidranath Tagore, the leader of Bengal Revivalist Movement of Indian Art. Abanidranath Tagore's paintings on Kashmir have recently been brought out in a volume titled *The Charm of Kashmir, with Numerous Paintings* (Aryan Books International, New Delhi.).

Kampassi was an outstanding landscape painter, excelling equally in watercolour and oil.He used mostly oil and was quite at ease with distemper as well. Kampassi was a skilled portrait painter and drew his own portrait by looking at the mirror. In 1940s he was Vice-principal of the Technical Institute. After Mukerjee's retirement he was appointed its principal.

JAGAR NATH MATTOO

Jagar Nath Mattoo belonged to Narishori mohalla of Srinagar. He taught design at the Technical Institute. He displayed brilliance in letter-writing and designing. Mattoo made good portraits. He had drawn a 3-D portrait of goddess Sharika. He would always lend a helping hand to deserving students. Mattoo was suave and had aristocratic flair in

conversation. FH Andrews utilised Mattoo's services in arranging East Turkistan finds explored by Stein in 1912 expedition. PN Kachru describes Mattoo as a "technological genius and a thinker." [25] After retirement Mattoo taught drawing at Burn Hall School at Srinagar.

JAGAR NATH SAPRU (1916-2001)

Jagar Nath Sapru hailed from Mallapora (Banamohalla) locality of Habba Kadal.He did his diploma in Fine Arts from Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute before moving to J. J. School of Arts, Bombay, for further training.He received Gold Medal from The City & Guilds Institute, London.Subsequently, he joined State Government and taught Fine Arts at different Industrial Training Institutes in Anantnag, Budgam, Kishtwar and Poonch.During the 1947-48 siege of Poonch he was held up in Poonch.

JN Sapru's forte was landscape painting. He made very few portraits. Essentially, a watercolourist he would do equally well in oil. His landscape paintings were purchased by Russians, Americans, Arabs and French. Senior Army officers would engage Sapru in making oil portraits of the departed ones of their families. Sapru would make good pencilsketches too. His landscape paintings were readily accepted by the Institute of Designs for display in the exhibitions. Sapru also had a stint as an instructor at the School of Designs. He abhorred modern abstract art.

JN Sapru was a close friend of Dina Nath Kaul *Nadim* and DN Walli. He had great appreciation for Walli's landscape paintings. Sapru was a prolific painter. The huge treasure that he painted during his lifetime was lost when he had to leave Kashmir in 1990. Some of his landscapes can still be seen in houseboats moored in Nagin Lake.

Sapru got official assignments for painting. He had done many paintings of the people killed in anti-monarchy agitation (1931), which were installed in the gallery at the National Conference Headquarters at Mujahid Manzil. These were lost when the building was gutted in a fire some years ago. He was actively associated with Jashn-e-Kashmir and did set designing for some of the items and for the boat procession of the Russian leaders, Bulganin and Khruschev. As per family sources the emblem on Revenue Stamp of the state was also drawn by JN Sapru.[26] Sapru did set designing for Badami Bagh Theatre and for some plays staged at the Tagore Hall.

SHIV NATH RAINA (1899-1961)

Shiv Nath Raina lived in Badiyar, the home to leading artists of Kashmir. A versatile painter and a competent teacher, he was an ace craftsman too.

Shiv Nath inherited love for painting and music from his father Narayan Joo (Thalchoor). After passing Matriculation he joined Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute to pursue painting and decoration. Raina's teachers at the Institute included two brilliant instructors, Fred Andrews (Designing and Crafts) and JC Mukerjee (Painting). When Shiv Nath was only half way through the training Mukerjee is said to have told him that he required no further training. Andrews too appreciated abilities of Raina and helped him secure the Drawing Master's job without any delay. Later, Shiv Nath came in contact with another famous British artist Percy Brown.

Raina's first teaching assignment was at Govt. M. P. High School, Dilawar Khan where Sheikh Abdullah was his colleague. He had a brief stint as an artist in the State Textbook Advisory Board. Shiv Nath's only posting outside Srinagar was in the Jammu city. He taught drawing at Govt. Ranbir High School. In Jammu he came in contact with Sansar Chand Baru. The latter was also a product of Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute. The two artists became good friends. The State government avoided posting Shiv Nath out of Srinagar as his services were quite often required for official work.

Shiv Nath came into prominence in Jammu when he painted a marvellous hoarding depicting Sheikh Abdullah as the architect of 'Naya Kashmir.' Soon after accession Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was appointed as the Head of the Emergency Administration. A grand reception was organised for him at the Parade Grounds. Shiv Nath was given only two days to complete the hoarding. The theme and design were to be worked out by him. Shiv Nath worked the whole night, engaging his sons also who could wield brush well. The hoarding showed Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as the architect of 'Naya Kashmir' with a crown in his hand, and men, women and children from Kashmir, Ladakh and Jammu handing over to him bricks signifying education, endeavour and devotion. The hoarding was so fascinating that its poster was subsequently adopted by the State Information Department for promotion of national integration, peace and prosperity.

Raina generally used distemper paints but was comfortable in every medium—oil, watercolour, pastel, pencil crayon and chalk. He once made a beautiful pencilsketch, depicting Maharaja Hari Singh in Raj Tilak ceremonial dress and extending hands to reach out to Yuvraj Karan Singh. At the annual Industrial Exhibtions Shiv Nath had additional responsiblity as incharge of art gallery. He received many awards for his paintings, including a gold medal for the painting titled *Calamity*. It depicted an artist who was caught in a storm.Fallen Chinar leaves and snakes running around for safety were also shown. His another well-known painting was *Harmony*. In 1958 the Republic Day tableau *Winter in Kashmir* designed by Shiv Nath won the first prize. It was the first occasion when J&K State bagged this award.

In teaching Shiv Nath was generous to a fault to youngsters and others who wanted to learn painting. They had free access to his home. Despite his modest means Shiv Nath had built a good Dewankhana (a specious chamber), where the upcoming artists were coached and entertained with Kahwa. Coaching was conducted without any fee. GR Santosh, Som Nath Bhat, Suraj Tiku, Radha Krishan Sadhu, Amar Nath Vaishnavi, Som Nath Munshi, Ghulam Nabi (Draftsman in PWD Deptt.) and many others visited his home quite often. Well-known personalities, who learnt painting from Shiv Nath, included former Chief Secretary, SAS Qadri, Dr ON Thussu, Dr Jia Lal Chattabali and Mirza Saif-ud-Din.

Shiv Nath's dictum was: "No artist has the right to be a painter unless he has mastery over drawing." Only then one could choose a style, depending upon talent, temperament and aspirations. He also said that nature was the best teacher for an upcoming artist. During his stay in Srinagar in 1949, the artist SH Raza would often visit Shiv Nath's home. While appreciating Shiv Nath's emphasis on drawing Raza once made an on-the-spot drawing of Shiv Nath's daughter to explain certain nuances in portrait drawing to Mohan, Shiv Nath's son.

Shiv Nath was a master designer and a born innovator. His innovations included indigenously made *Taranga*, a headgear worn by Pandit ladies and plasticine, special clay used in moulds. He received an award in designing from a visiting dignitary at a camp in Ganderbal. Shiv Nath was a master in plaster casting, clay, cardboard, cotton modelling, papiermâchié, knitting and embroidery. He once made his own mould.

He was also an institution builder. Wherever he went he would set up a museum and an art gallery. He made Babapora School a model school for learning drawing. Artists like GR Santosh and Suraj Tiku had early lessons in drawing from this school.

Shiv Nath coordinated All India Education Conference held at S. P. College in 1945. This conference had many items on its agenda, viz, drama, exhibitions, symposia, recitation and debates.

In his early years Shiv Nath painted wings and panels for Saraswati Dramatic Club and also provided background music. Like many of his peers he was driven to social uplift. He worked for Kashyap Bandhu's reformist movement during 1932-33 and drew cartoons for pamphlets produced by Bandhuji. Shiv Nath silently helped widows.

Shiv Nath played upon the harmonium and the sitar which had been given to him by Maharaja Pratap Singh.For Maharaja's Gadadar Puja Raina had made the stage.

Raina's student AN Vaishnavi says that even Shiv Nath's way of talking was artistic. Shiv Nath inculcated love for drawing and music in his children. Omkar Nath Raina is an excellent musician and runs his own music institute. Jawahar is a good painter and plays upon the sitar as well. Maharaj Krishan is a good singer and plays upon the tabla. Pran Nath served as a drawing teacher in J&K Government. Moti Lal was also very good in drawing, and has flair for writing. The fourth generation of the Rainas remains actively involved in music at professional level.

MOHAN RAINA (1927-1983)

Mohan Raina developed interest in art early mainly by watching his father Shiv Nath working for long hours on canvases. It was Shiv Nath who gave him the first lessons in painting. Later, Mohan learnt the use of the oil from Sat Lal Kampassi and sketching from Mohi-ud-Din, both prominent artists. Raina did his diploma in painting and decoration from Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute, stood first in the examination and received a gold medal.

Raina was an enthusiastic learner.This sharpened his creativity and helped him to emerge as a versatile artist. Mohan had mastery in all

genres of painting, i.e., landscape, portraiture, designing, caricature, illustrations and abstract art. Be it oil or watercolour, Mohan was always at ease, but his preference remained for watercolour. Though he laid emphasis on colour scheme, composition and direct treatment of the theme in painting yet to him perfection in drawing was the basic requisite for a good artist. All this was reflected in his paintings. He displayed his paintings in group and solo exhibitions at different places in the country and abroad. Raina received many awards including a Gold Medal from Lalit Kala Akademi.

Mohan Raina was among the first Kashmiri artists to go to a foreign university for higher education in Fine Arts. He enrolled himself at the University of Illinois, USA, for learning modern art. In view of his immense capabilities the faculty suggested him to take up the history of art. During his two-year stay in Illinois (1964-1966) Mohan held many exhibitions of his paintings there. He drew good appreciation from art critics. He also had the opportunity to do illustration work for 3-volume Dictionary of Kashmiri Language compiled by Prof. BB Kachru, an internationally known linguist at the University of Illinois.

Raina started his career as an artist in Research and Publication Wing of J&K Education Department. Later, he was transferred to the State Information Department, and retired as Exhibition Officer in 1982.

Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah valued Mohan Raina's artistic abilities and quite often requisitioned his services for official work. Mohan designed emblems for J&K State, J&K University and also made logos, monograms and emblems for other departments. Many of Raina's students included prominent civil servants who pursued painting as a hobby.

When the Rainas shifted to Jammu in 1990 they left behind a large collection of paintings done by Mohan Raina and his father in their house at Badiyar. This priceless treasure was lost when their house was looted and burnt in 1991.

DINA NATH WALLI (1907-2007)

Dina Nath Walli hailed from Badiyar locality of Habba Kadal. After completing a 3-year course in painting from Sir Amar Singh Technical

Institute he moved to Calcutta in 1930. He worked as a set designer for Madan Theatres, a Parsi Theatre company. In Calcutta he came in contact with Percy Brown, then Principal of College of Arts, Calcutta. Brown was a noted art historian. He helped Walli considerably in his career.

DN Walli returned to Srinagar in 1936 and worked as a full-time professional. Old timers recall seeing him carrying his paintings in a boat to sell them to European tourists. Walli would make beautiful landscapes, much like the British watercolourists. He used transparent watercolours. A sensitive landscape painter, he had an unmistakable eye of observing nature from different angles. He had genuine feelings for expression.

Walli held his first one-man show at Nedous Hotel in 1953. It was inaugurated by Percy Brown. He also held solo exhibition of his paintings at Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta. His exhibitions received rave reviews. About his Delhi exhibition one critic wrote:"Ever since the exhibition of American watercolours sometime back there has been no other exhibition of landscape in the capital that can be favourably compared with the present exhibition."[27]

Some of his finest watercolours on Kashmir are:-

Circular Road, Gulmarg, A Street on the Bund, A Riverside Temple, Dal Lake in Summer, Houseboats on Nagin Lake, Houseboat in Moonlight, Nanga Parbat from Gulmarg, Pir Panchal in Autumn, Akbar's Bridge, Road to Pir Panchal, Seshnag Waters, Mar Canal at Rainawari.

Walli was a skilled portrait painter too. His painting depicting a cow (Vishr) in sitting position and her calf (Gouri) with their owner Ishwar Dass Tiku stroking the cow gently is a masterpiece. This painting has an interesting story behind it.[28]

Walli was also a good poet in Kashmiri. He wrote under the nom de plume *Almast*. He penned down his verses in two books titled *Bala Yepari* (On this Side of the Hill) and *Sahraavuky Posh* (Desert Flowers).

DN Walli's brother Amar Nath Walli was a drawing teacher. He too was a product of the Technical Institute. Amarnath was proficient both in Urdu and Kashmiri, and used to write devotional and romantic poetry.

SOM NATH KHOSA (1912-1983)

Som Nath Khosa's family hails from Syed Ali Akbar locality of Habba Kadal. Som Nath Khosa started as a commercial artist but devoted last twenty-five years of his life to painting Gandhi. It became his passion. Khosa was a student of Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute, Srinagar, and received training in fine and commercial art. After finishing his art course he went to Lahore to try his luck as a commercial artist in the film world. Those days Lahore was the main centre of cinema industry. He had to paint huge cinema banners to earn his living. Soon he took over as the main banner painter of the industry. He also tried his hand as an art director for films.

Khosa left the cinema industry and worked as an art director of Kipling's well-known daily *Civil and Military Gazette* in Lahore. Here he came in contact with the Britishers and also learnt offset printing.

It was in Lahore that Som Nath Khosa learnt the realist school of oil painting while assisting British artists. He had already mastered the art of painting landscapes in Srinagar. Som Nath loved to paint landscapes and became a famous landscape painter those days. In Lahore Khosa came in contact with BC Sanyal and Dhanraj Bhagat who taught at the Mayo School of Art. Bhagat was a well-known sculptor of his time. Khosa was also known to Dr. Charles Fabri, the art historian. Fabri has referred to Khosa in his works.

During the summer of 1947 Som Nath Khosa came to Srinagar on an assignment for the Punjab University. He had to do illustration work for a book on Kashmir. In the partition riots that followed his flat and studio in Lahore were ransacked, looted and burnt down.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, senior leader of National Conference, was a friend of Som Nath Khosa from his childhood days. Through Bakshi he came in contact with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and left-leaning leaders of National Conference. He was actively associated with the activities of the Cultural Front. Khosa made a big painting depicting Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on horseback and leading Kashmiris in the battle against tribal raiders. In the critical months of October and November in 1947 this painting was on display at Palladium Cinema, headquarters of National Conference leadership those days.

From the very beginning of his career as an artist Som Nath was inspired by Gandhi's leadership of the freedom movement. Soon after

Gandhi's assassination he painted a huge portrait of Gandhi with a lantern in his left hand. This painting was put up in Lal Chowk, Srinagar. It drew huge crowds the next day. From this day it became his dream to do some monumental work on Gandhi.

Som Nath Khosa went to Delhi in 1950. After hard struggle in different advertising agencies as a commercial artist Khosa became the art director of *The Times of India*, Delhi. He did portraits of many leading industrialists including RK Dalmia the proprietor of *The Times of India*.

Around 1958 Khosa left *The Times of India* and began collecting all the rare material—photographs and books on Gandhi. He started transforming the rare moments of Mahatma into oil colour paintings. He wanted to show the life of Mahatma Gandhi to the masses in colour since there was no colour photography those days. To realize his dream he sold off his possessions including household utensils. Khosa kept on painting Gandhi till his death in 1983.

Khosa made 125 paintings on Gandhi. His work is significant. Khosa's whole work on Gandhi was done during the times when artistic response to Gandhi became non-existent because the artists were looking for new expressions, which had little to do with Gandhi's ideals. It is only after 1990 that master painters like Atul Dodiya, Jyoti Bhatt, Ashim Purkayastha and others started painting Gandhi again. Many of Khosa's paintings are at present auctioned by an auction house in Mumbai. Some of these paintings have fetched as high prices as Jamini Roy's painting of Gandhi. Som Nath Khosa's realist works on Gandhi are on display at Gandhi Smiriti in New Delhi and at Birla Museum (Haveli Museum) in Pilani. A small body of his work is also archived by Naville Tuli of Osians in Mumbai.

Som Nath's father Gopi Nath Khosa (Shamboonath Guhe) was an ascetic. He was a well- known guru of Hampi caves in Karnataka. His son Kashmiri Khosa and grand-daughter are also noted artists and grandson Rajan Khosa is a film director who makes philosophical films.

MANOHAR KAUL

Manohar Kaul belonged to Rainawari. His interest in painting started when he was very young. He obtained diploma in painting from Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute and passed in first division.

Manohar Kaul always loved to depict Kashmir in his paintings. His landscape paintings have a special charm and aesthetic value and look like mystical studies. In his last years he introduced light in his works and also laid emphasis on the changing effects of the environment and atmosphere. Some of his works are based on colour therapy. He believed that each colour has its own meaning and a special quality.[29] Kaul has done only a few portraits.

Kaul served as a bureaucrat in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and retired in 1980s. He was an art critic of repute and edited the art journal *Kala Darshan* and revived *Roop Lekha*. As chairman of the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society (AIFACS) he resurrected four galleries which were once given up by artists for their derelict condition. Manohar Kaul also authored *Trends in Indian Painting—Ancient, Medieval and Modern, Ajanta and Ellora, Art and Architecture of Rajasthan, South Indian Temple Architecture, Kashmir—Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim Architecture.*

RATAN PARIMOO

Ratan Parimoo (born in 1936) hails from Habba Kadal locality of Srinagar. He is an art historian and painter of international repute. His recent series of paintings titled *Chaurapanchshika:Iconography of a Nayika* received rave reviews.

Parimoo joined M.S. University, Baroda in 1951, completed B. A. in Fine Arts/Painting in 1955 and then pursued M. A. in Fine Creative Painting and P. G. Diploma in Museology. He organized his first one-man show at Srinagar in 1958. It was held at Nedous Hotel and inaugurated by Dr. AAA Fyzee, the then Vice-chancellor of Kashmir University. His first abstract painting (1958) was exhibited in the Annual Exhibition of J&K Cultural Academy. In the summer of 1976, Parimoo was invited to participate in the camps organized by J&K Cultural Academy.Parimoo joined the faculty of M. S. University, Baroda in 1959.

Ratan Parimoo was the first Kashmiri to be selected for the Commonwealth scholarship programme of the British Government in 1960. In 1963 he studied history of European Art at the London University and got a B. A. (Hons.). In 1966 Ratan Parimoo was appointed Head of the Department of Art History and Aesthetics and served in that capacity till 1991.During his tenure he introduced innovative

techniques in research and teaching of the history of art and aesthetics. He expanded the scope of studio teaching.

Parimoo was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts in 1975 after Bendre, Sankho Chaudhury and KG Subramanium. In 1991 Ratan Parimoo was selected for the Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship.

Before joining the faculty Parimoo painted Kashmir in oil on canvas and oil on board. His paintings on Kashmir include:-
Habba Kadal (1957), Lotus Valley (1957), Still Life with Kashmiri Objects (1958), Kashmiri Family (1958), Rice Fields (1958), Dal Lake (1959) and Tongas (1959).

Parimoo is married to Naina Dalal, a fellow artist. In style Ratan used to go for abstracts while Naina preferred figures. In his abstract paintings Parimoo painted in a flat, light style and introduced unconnected images. He has held numerous exhibitions of his painitings.
Prof. Ratan Parimoo's published works are:-

- *Paintings on Three Tagores, Abanidranath, Gaganendranath and Rabindranath (1973)*
- *Studies in Modern Indian Art*
- *Life of Buddha in Indian Sculpture*
- *Sculptures of Sheshashayi Visnu*
- *The Paintings of Rabindranath Tagore*
- *The Pictorial World of Gaganendranath Tagore*
- *Studies in Indian Sculpture : Essays in New Art History*

'THE TRIO'

A group of three upcoming artists, Som Nath Bhat, Triloke Koul and Prithvi Nath Kachru, 'The Trio', emerged on the scence in 1947. They were influenced by Marxism and launched the Progressive Art Movement in Kashmir in March 1948. It was a chapter of the Cultural Front/Cultural Congress. Of the three only Bhat was a trained artist.

The artistic faculties of 'TheTrio' were influenced by two noted artists, SH Raza of J. J. School of Arts and Percy Brown. Raza visited Srinagar in March 1948 and painted more than 250 landscapes in three months. He also painted scenes of local militia. Raza introduced 'The Trio' to French Masters[30] and the post-impressionist principles of aesthetics which were chiefly charged with concepts of eastern

orientalism and respect for pictorial values as opposed to naturalism. 'The Trio' would paint and send their works to Raza for comments.

The second inspiration for 'The Trio' was Percy Brown. After his retirement Brown shifted to Srinagar and stayed in his two-storeyed houseboat Catherine near Srinagar Club. He became their patron and advised them to search for inspiration and guidance from formalism in Harwan expressions and from the beauty of Baroque in Ushkur Terracottas. [31] About the painting fervour of 'The Trio' Brown said: "This movement of Kashmir reminds me of pre-Raphaelite Movement of Britain." Brown died on 5th March, 1957 and lies buried in Sheikh Bagh Cemetery of Srinagar.

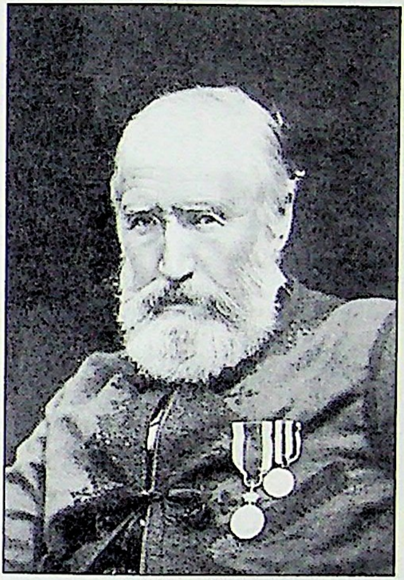
Contacts with the other Progressive Art groups in India helped 'The Trio' to gain exposure to new trends and enlist facilities for holding exhibitions. Other noted artists and art historians also visited Srinagar. HA Gade came to Kashmir and did a lot of painting. Mulk Raj Anand visited Srinagar during 1948-49.

'The Trio' held the first painting exhibition at Srinagar on 20th June, 1948. Another 3-day exhibition was held in September, 1948. Bhat and Koul also held an exhibition in Bombay. Minoo Masani inaugurated it. It received good reviews.

Delhi Exhibition held on Ist October, 1948 received encouraging reviews. Som Nath Bhat was described as 'the Rising Star of the East', 'the semi-abstract landscapist' and 'a wizard of colour combinations.' Triloke Koul was called 'the painter of the mountains, snowscapes and a romantic expressionist.' PN Kachru was hailed as 'the painter of life and people and assessing the qualities of Rembrandesque Monumentalism.'[32]

'The Trio' held exhibitions regularly every year in Delhi and Bombay. It brought them in close contact with outstanding art critics and historians like Dr. Herman Goetz, KK Nayyar and Dr. Charles Fabri. Dr. Goetz attended the Srinagar Exhibition 'Spring Festival' in May 1951 and purchased many paintings for Baroda Museum Art Gallery. He termed the art movement in Kashmir as 'the continuance and rejuvenation of Pahari Himalayan Movement of Kashmir School.'[33]

Mulk Raj Anand and Percy Brown wanted to start an Art College in Kashmir in 1949 and submitted a project plan. Anand wanted Triloke Koul to go to Mexico to learn painting as Satish Gujral had



William Simpson



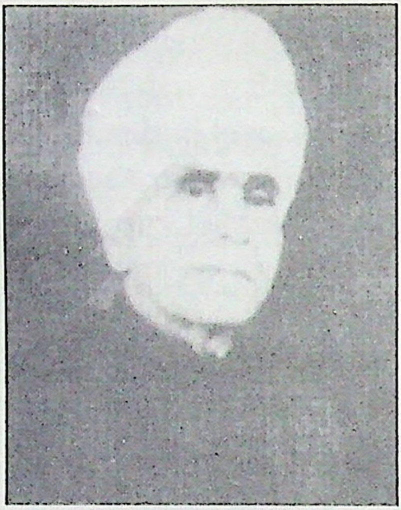
Narayan Kachroo Murtgar



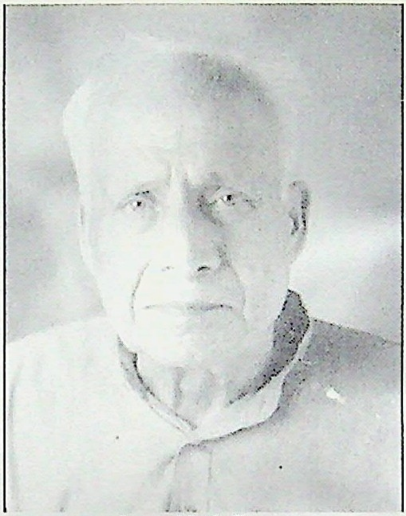
Portrait of Maharaja Gulab Singh
(By J.D. Harding)



Portrait of Saint Parmanand
(By Narayan Kachroo Murtgar)



Maheshwar Nath Dhar



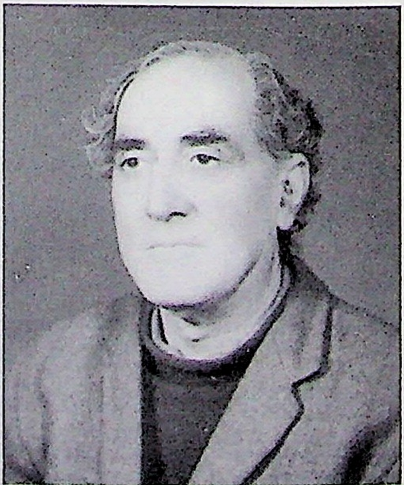
Jagar Nath Sapru



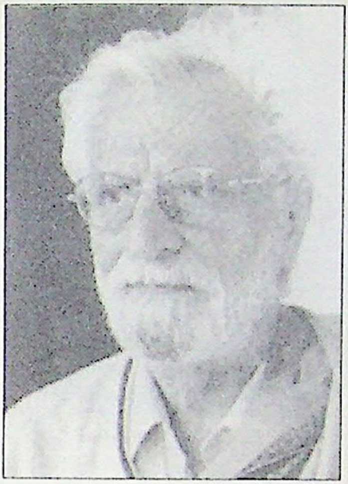
FH Andrews



Dina Nath Walli Almast



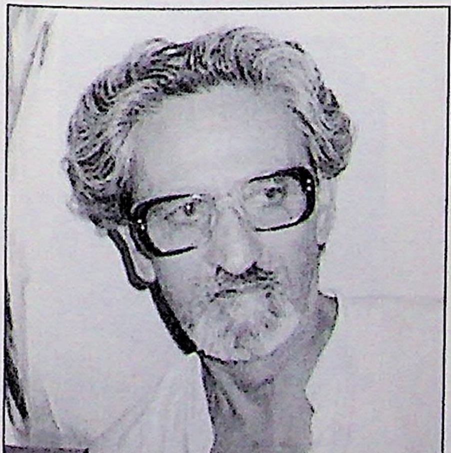
Som Nath Khosa


Manohar Kaul


Mohan Raina


Ratan Parimoo


Ghulam Rasool Santosh


Triloke Koul


Kishori Koul



Kashmiri Khosa



Bhushan Koul



Maharaj Krishan Bhat



Nissar Aziz Beg



Gokul Dembi



Bansi Parimu



AK Raina



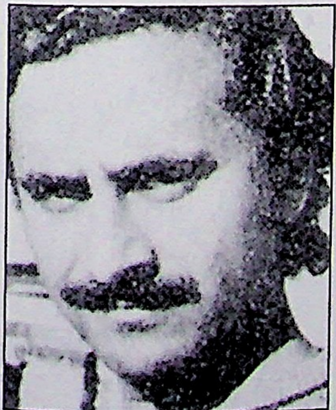
MA Mehboob



Mohammad Sadiq



AR John



Shuban K. Kaw



Nasreen Mohsin



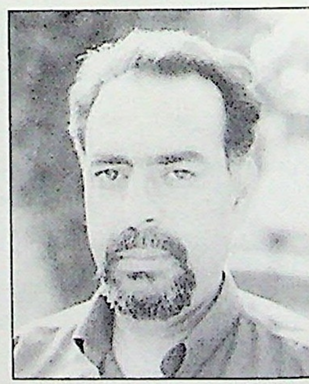
Veer Munshi



Masood Hussain



Zahoor Zargar



Kamal Nain Bhan



PK Razdan

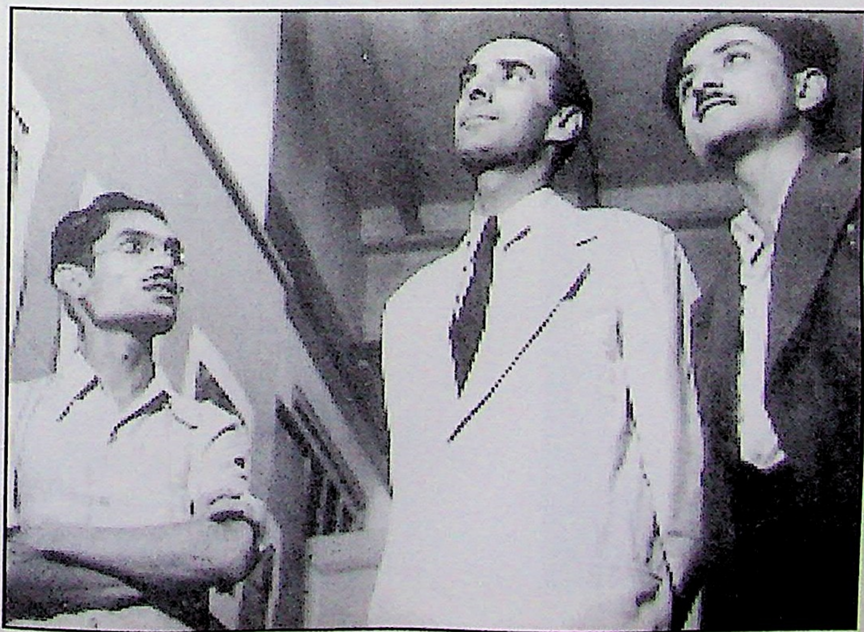


Usha Nehru



Top:
Baroda, 1956:
Artists at M.S. University displaying their paintings. Seen in the photograph are G.R Santosh (sitting, extreme left), Ratan Parimoo (standing, Ist row extreme left), Triloke Koul (standing, Ist row extreme right)

Bottom:
Bombay, 1949:
Minoo Masani having a look at the paintings exhibited by Som Nath Bhat (L) and Triloke Koul (R)



Noted Sculptors



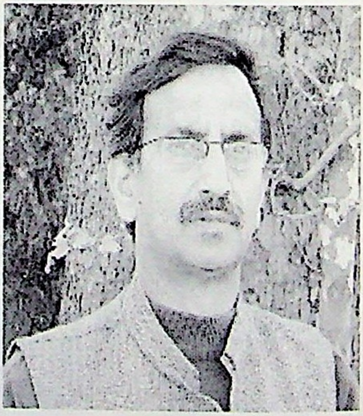
Brij Krishen Sultan



Gayoor Hassan



Bashir Shora



Shabir Mirza



Shaiqa Mohi



Rajinder Tiku

done. Due to certain reasons Triloke Koul had to choose Baroda instead of Mexico. Baroda emerged as the new destination of Kashmiris who aspired to learn fine arts.

PN Kachru acknowledges the debt Kashmir artists owe to Baroda School. He recalls: "It was from the Baroda chapter that the abstract and cubist conception penetrated into Kashmiri style along with the typical Indian cubist influences of the style of George Keyt by coming in touch with Madras progressive painters."[34] The Indian cubism took its first roots in Baroda faculty under the leadership of Narayan Shridhar Bendre and Shanko Choudhary. Ratan Parimoo also gave supportive lead for the recognition of the traditional form and Indian folk movements.

SOM NATH BHAT

Som Nath Bhat was born in 1924. He lived at Badiyar in Habba Kadal. Painting was his passion even from school days. He learnt it initially from his school drawing teachers. His zeal grew through his contacts with visiting painters. In 1942 he went to Bombay to learn painting under the artist GM Solegaonkar[35] who taught him landscape painting.

Bhat was first and foremost a landscape painter. He also worked in Bombay for sometime where he received generous assistance from Mulk Raj Anand and DR Wadia. He worked as a full-time painter except in 1949 when he was forced to go for the job of a drawing teacher in a private school at a meagre wage. In his later works Bhat achieved the sensitive sophistry of pastel effect in colours, for which he was greatly influenced by the renowned French painter George Barque of the Post-impressionist trio—Matisse, Barque and Picasso.

TRILOKE KOUL

Triloke Koul hails from Shala Kadal locality of Habba Kadal and was self-taught in painting till 1948. It was Raza who inspired and supplied the preliminary professional tips to Koul. Triloke Koul did M.A. in Mathematics from Lucknow University in 1944.

Koul resigned his job as Superintendent of Chief Administration in Uri and went to M.S. University, Baroda in 1952 to pursue B.A. in Fine Arts under NS Bendre. He was the second Kashmiri student to go there, the first being Ratan Parimoo. Triloke financed his education by holding exhibitions at Srinagar and Jehangir Art Gallery, Bombay. He

finished the course in 1955 and took up a job in Srinagar in 1957. He served for many years as Director of School of Designs. The basic objective of this institute was to promote Kashmiri handicrafts.

In 1948 Triloke Koul started as an impressionistic landscape painter. From 1948 till 1954 he gradually moved towards expressionist style. He subsequently adopted cubism. In 1962 Lalit Kala Akademi organised a seminar on 'Indian Cubist Movement' in which Triloke Koul was named as one of the few cubists of Indian art movement.[36]

PN KACHRU

PN Kachru who hails from Rainawari learnt painting at Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute from JN Mattoo and JC Mukerjee in 1944. Kachru passed graduation in 1944 and went to study English Literature at Lahore (1945-46). He has participated in exhibitions at Srinagar, Delhi, Bombay, Lucknow, Jammu and Calcutta.

Besides being a practising artist, he is a researcher on Kashmir art and literature. His well-researched articles include:-

- *Modern Kashmir Art Movement and its Founders*
- *Origin of Pahari School of Painting*
- *Kashmir Buddhist Sites—Harwan, Ushkur, Hutumar*
- *Kashmir School of Terracottas—the Ushkur School*

Around this time Nissar Aziz Beg, Umesh Koul, Fida Hassnain and Bansi Parimu also took to painting.

BANSI PARIMU (1933-1991)

Popularly known as 'Bansi Artist' Bansi Parimu (born in 1933) lived at Safariyar in Habba Kadal. His paintings were first displayed in an exhibition held by Progressive Artists Group and subsequently abroad. His interests ranged from journalism and photography to floriculture. He also acted in a play *Takdirsaaz* scripted by Ali Mohammed Lone.He passed away in 1991.

GHULAM RASOOL SANTOSH

Ghulam Rasool Santosh (born in 1929) lived in Chinkral mohalla locality of Habba Kadal. He took to drawing when he was just seven years old. He had to discontinue his studies after Matriculation due to the early death of his father. His family sustained on the meagre income earned

by Santosh from doing small jobs like painting signboards.

Initially trained in weaving and papier-mâchié Santosh developed interest in painting in 1950. He learnt landscape painting under the guidance of Som Nath Bhat. In 1954 he was awarded Govt. of India fellowship for two years to learn painting under Prof. NS Bendre at Baroda University. Initially, Santosh experimented with the direct semi-cubist approach of human figures of Bendre and also adopted influences from figurative style of MF Hussain. His semi-abstract paintings show unusual treatment of snow-clad houses and the backwaters touching the banks of the Jehlum.[37]

Santosh's major contribution is in linking modern art movement in Kashmir with the indigenous roots. He was influenced by native philosophies of Shaktism and Shaivism. In 1964 he incorporated these themes to create some of the best examples of modern Tantric paintings. Santosh's Tantric doctrine is anti-ascetic. His superb paintings in this genre include *Jivan Jyoti, Shiv Shakti* and *Zalla Rupe*. In later paintings he often became figurative with stylized self-portraiture. Santosh very artfully resorted to the exclusive experimentation and manipulation in the basic geometric structure of the Sri Chakra[38]. He believed Tirathas of Kashmir were so located that they gave a feeling of Sri Chakra. [39]

Santosh was a good portrait painter as well. Art lovers appreciate his paintings for the vibrancy of colours, neat lines, energy and sensuousness. During his career as an artist Santosh held over thirty solo exhibitions of his works in India and abroad. In 1984 he was adjudged as the best artist of the year. Earlier in 1977 he was awarded the Lalit Kala Akademi Award.

Santosh was a good writer and poet too. His poetic collection *Besukh Ruh* received Sahitya Akademy award in 1979. He was in the forefront of the campaign for the preservation of Hari Parbat as a heritage site. Santosh passed away in 1997.

KASHMIRI KHOSA

Som Nath Khosa's son Kashmiri Khosa (born in 1940) learnt painting while assisting his father on large realist paintings. Kashmiri Khosa's works are figurative and abstract with metaphysical themes. According to a critic Khosa's paintings "reflect a crusade to preserve the austerity

and ethics of art and gauge twin polarities in the realm of thoughts, from singleness to cosmic oneness, from human bondage to transcendence where perishable hits self carried away by endless human desires. The permanent remains behind merging in the self." Khosa explains: "This world has come out of nothing and will ultimately merge into nothingness. Man struggles hard to come out of the sheaths of existence and realises that the evolution process favours living in harmony with nature. I endeavour to depict this truth on canvas through my brush." He took to painting as a vehicle to voice his feelings through this medium.

Kashmiri Khosa has been a professional painter since 1962. He uses ink, pencil and oil, and has held ten solo shows in Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta, and has participated in international exhibitions as well.

In 1989 Khosa was asked to do the space conception and execution of the 'International Exhibition of Contemporary Cultural Complexes' by Indira Gandhi National Centre of Arts. He received senior fellowship from the Department of Culture for working on 'Integrating the Visual Language of Art and Content and Coordinating it as a Whole'.

Khosa has also collaborated with his contemporaries in poetry, literature and theatre. This endeavour led to the launching of journals like *Criteria* and *Anti-poetry* and staging of an experimental play, *Virajpetta Se Aaye Aurat*, a blend of theatre, painting and poetry.It was staged at Shri Ram Centre, Delhi, in 1987.

KISHORI KOUL

Kishori Koul (born in 1939) is the greatgrand-daughter of Narayan Kachru, Kashmir's last miniature artist. Her first teacher in painting was Som Nath Bhat. She joined Baroda University, passed B. A. in Fine Arts in 1963 and M. A in Fine Arts in 1966 with distinction. Koul has participated in exhibitions with Triloke Koul, GR Santosh and PN Kachru.

Kishori Koul generally works on canvas with oil.Her paintings on Kashmir include:--

Earth (1953), *Green Fields* (1991), *Lotus Lake* (1992), *Srinagar* (1993), *Spring Amidst Snow* (1993), *Still Like Samovar* (1993), *Sunset* (1993) and *Autmun* (1993). Her landscapes, though instinctively belonging to Kashmir, contemplate various moods of nature.

CONTEMPORARY PAINTERS

Contemporary well-known painters include Gokul Dembi, Bhushan Koul, Maharaj Krishan Bhat, Avtar Krishan Raina, Mohammed Sadiq, Shuban Krishan Kaw, AR John, MA Mehboob, Nasreen Mohsin, Masood Hussain, Zahoor Zargar, Veer Munshi, Panchsheel Koul, Kapil Koul, Kamal Nain Bhan and Shabir Santosh. Mohammed Sadiq was a sensitive artist who loved to paint Kashmir landscapes. He was a superb colourist. Shuja Sultan was a good painter and an outstanding poet.

Gokul Dembi, Bansi Parimu, Bhushan Koul, Veer Munshi and PN Kachru have also tried to link exile to their art. Dembi's one untitled painting depicts Kashmiri Pandits led by Pt. Kripa Ram seeking Guru Tegh Bahadur's help at Anandpur Sahib. He also painted the portraits of Shri Bhat, Kripa Ram Dutt and Birbal Dhar, the three famous Kashmiri Pandits in history. Parimu's painting about exile is titled *Cobwebs of Apathy* (1991). Bhushan Koul and PN Kachru's paintings are titled *The Judgement* and *Extermination* respectively. Veer Munshi's first series of paintings after 1990 was a reaction to the forced exodus of Kashmiri Pandit community.[40] The titles of these paintings are:

Exhortation in Red Ring, The Illusion, Exiles of the Valley, Hope against Hope, Fate of a Kashmiri Pandit, Hostage and *Sharika.*

In the second series Munshi tries to seek answers to larger issues concerning Kashmir. Dembi shifts to philosophical themes by painting *Vaakhs* of Lal Ded.

Good painters who did not paint regularly include Dwarka Nath Gigoo, Makhan Lal Dhar and Sham Lal Suri. Gigoo knew many languages and was a good poet.In painting he used watercolour and pastel colours. He started with portraits, shifted to religious and mythological themes and ended up as a landscape painter. Makhan Lal Dhar's painting depicting Nilakanth Sharma, a noted scholar and his wife, was widely appreciated and makes Dhar a skilled portrait painter. Sham Lal Suri of Baramulla was also a good portrait painter. He did a painting of goddess Sharika, which was installed at Hari Parbat. Sant ji Sultan and Shama Sondhi have held exhibitions of their paintings. Sondhi paints in abstract expressionistic style and is a poet too. Fouzia Sanober Qazi, basically a mathematician,has proved her skill in painting. Her paintings on Kashmir include *The Shah Hamadan Mosque on River Jehlum, An Old Street in Islamabad (Anantnag)* and *Early Morning on A Canal in Srinagar.* Well-known painters of Kashmiri origin based in Delhi include PK Razdan and Usha Nehru.

SCULPTORS

Kashmir's noted sculptors include Gayoor Hassan, Shabir Mirza, Shaiqa Mohi, Rajinder Tiku and Mir Imtiaz. BK Sultan was the first Kashmiri to receive training in sculpture. He was a favourite student of BC Sanyal.Rajinder Tiku's sculptures have won him international recognition. Bashir Shora and Gayoor Hassan, though trained as sculptors, have painted regularly. The latter has also been actively involved in theatre, particularly in set designing and make-up.

MISCELLANEOUS

Many alumni of Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute were appointed drawing teachers in government schools. A few of them set up their own businesses like letter-writing.

MOHI-UD-DIN

Mohi-ud-Din hailed from a downtown locality of Srinagar and was a competent drawing teacher. He would make good portraits and sketches. Later, he joined civil services and retired as Secretary, J&K Govt.

NILAKANTH ZADOO

Nilakanth Zadoo (born in 1914) lived in Mohalla Reshipeer. He did three-year diploma in painting and crafts and opened Jubilee Painting House near the Court Road in partnership with a class fellow. The two started their career like MF Hussain, i.e., by painting signage for the Palladium Cinema and signboards. Untimely death of his elder brother, Gopi Nath Zadoo, a scholar of Sanskrit and Shaivism, forced Nilakanth to take up job as a government teacher. He started first as a Hindi teacher and was subsequently promoted as drawing teacher.

As an artist, Nilakanth could do good portraits as well as landscapes. He had mastery in drawing designs. Walls of staff room of Amar Singh College and the lobby above the staircase had design work done by Nilakanth. The background paintings of Janam Ashtami tableau from Ali Kadal were made by him. He did make-up of the artists and prepared their head and arm bands. A big album, which contained the paintings of different birds and a few landscapes in watercolour done by him, was lost in a fire in his ancestral house in 1989. He also did a painting of Lord Ganesha for Batyar Temple. Nilakanth had a superb sense of colour design. He was awarded by the British Resident once for this. He passed away in 1995.

RADHA KRISHAN SADHU

Radha Krishan Sadhu hailed from Vessu village and was good both in landscape as well as portrait painting. Kulgam High School, where Radha Krishan served as drawing teacher, had a fine gallery of the portraits of leading personalities of the country. These were done by him.

KAILASH NATH FOTEDHAR

Kailash Nath Fotedhar (born in 1912) hailed from Sathu Barbarshah locality of Srinagar. After passing Matriculation from S. P. High School he joined Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute in 1928 to study Fine Arts. Subsequently, he joined Treasury Department of J&K Govt. and pursued painting only as pastime. He made good portraits and would go around making pencilsketches of animals and birds. He painted religious themes, made portraits of goddesses and gods of Hindu pantheon. These paintings would find their way to the Puja rooms of his friends and relatives. Family sources say that Fotedhar would occasionally do oil paintings as well. He painted a portrait of Lord Hanuman in oil.

OTHERS

Som Nath Munshi, Shamboo Nath Bhan and Amar Nath Vaishnavi, who served as drawing teachers in J&K Govt, were also students of the Amar Singh Technical Institute.

Ghulam Rasool of Badiyar and Mehraj-ud-Din of Amirakadal were students of the Amar Singh Technical Institute from 1944 till 1946. Mehraj-ud-Din set up 'Commercial Art' at Amira Kadal and Ghulam Rasool painted at home.

Radha Krishan Raina, an alumnus of Amar Singh Technical Institute, was a carpet designer. He was appointed technical advisor to Punjab Government and settled down at Dharamsala. He was a good sculptor as well.

THEATRE IN KASHMIR—A BRIEF HISTORY

Music, dance and drama have remained part of the social life of Kashmiris since time immemorial. This had strong religious sanction. Dances and dramas used to be performed in temples during religious festivals and at the Royal Court.

Even in the rule of Sultan Zainul -Abdin Budshah two contemporary historians, Jonaraja and Srivara, provided vivid details about a stage performance during a spring festival at Bijbehara. They say that a magnificent stage was erected for the royal court where the famous dancers, Tara and Ansu, performed to the great applause of the King and the people. We are also told about forty-nine modes of dancing, skilfully presented by the artistes during these performances. Drama was tinged with music and dance. The story either revolved round a mythological theme or touched upon some topical subject.

What is interesting is that the artistes paid due attention to make-up, costumes, sets, background music, etc. Colourful curtains were hung with bold pictures befitting the sequence painted on them. The stage had elaborate settings. Actors used good make-up and wore gorgeous costumes. Music was played to heighten the effect and evoke the emotions that the drama required.

The performing arts lost patronage with the passing away of Sultan Zainul-Abdin. Barring stray references to *Hafizas* (professional nautch girls), who danced and sang Sufiana music, we have no other evidence to suggest that performing arts survived the turbulent medieval times.

Stage was banished to the countryside where the professional bards

reduced the drama to a clumsy performance in the open field. These bards, called *Bhands*, performed *Jashn* which included dance, drama and music. The presence of Bhand families in Kulgam, Wathore, Akingam, Bumzu, Gulgam, Hatmulla, Karihama, Drugmulla and Aishmuqam indicates widespread popularity of Bhands among Kashmiris. The Bhand Jashn depicted social evils and bureaucratic high-handedness and even alluded to some historical event as in *Darza Paather*.

Till the first decade of the 20th century Bhand Jashn and Hafiza performances were the only surviving forms of performing arts for Kashmiris. According to Dina Nath *Nadim*, Swami Parmanand and Krishan Joo Razdan used to dance in costumes when they recited *Radha Swayamvara* or *Shiva Lagan*. This kind of performance was called *Tseth*[1] and provided the link between the Jashn and the Raas.

PN Kachru refers to another form of theatre called Braag Paather.[2] This was popular in Kulgam, Anantnag and even across the Simthan range. These were folk performances about the wild life wherein the jungle creatures formed the castle.Each actor played an animal and showed human relationship with wild creatures.

RAAS MANDLIS

Early stage drama in Kashmir can be traced to the seasonal visits of UP and Punjab *Raas Mandli* groups to Kashmir in the beginning of the 20th century. They gave performances in the open. Mandlis would begin their performances in the traditional style of *Krishan Leela*. Boys would play the roles of females. The shows would end with cheap ghazals sung in vulgar style and hooliganism.[3]

As against Raas Leelas, the Ram Leelas had better artistic perfection and were more popular. These had official patronage as well. Punjabi and Bohra communities were active in performing *Ram Leelas* and vied with each other in achieving excellence. Shivji Purbi[4] was the first Kashmiri to start performance of Raas and Ram Leela in Kashmiri style in the second decade of the 20th century.

There was social taboo associated with dramatic activity. Actors were derogatorily called *Raas Kath* since early drama activity in 20th century started with Raas Mandlis. Social censure kept many talented Kashmiris away from the stage. Jagan Nath Saqi, the great actor, who continued to perform throughout his life, had to remain a bachelor.

AMATEUR DRAMATIC CLUB

The first dramatic club in Kashmir was Amateur Dramatic Club.[4] The stage was erected at Basant Bagh, where the famous plays *Bilwamangal, Surdas, Veer Balak, Chandrawali* and *Mahabharat* were staged. Ram Krishna, Jiwan Lal Mattoo and Chet Ram Chopra were actively associated with this dramatic club.

Soon after, Saraswati Dramatic Club[5] was launched by another group of youth. It staged plays like *Achut Kanya, Danvir Karan ,Krishna Sudhama* and Kathavachak's *Vir Abhimanyu*. Aga Hashar Kashmiri's plays *Bewafa Qatil, Khoon Ka Khoon, Safed Khoon, Khoobsoorat Bala, Yahudi Ki Ladki* and *Khwab-i-Hasti* were also staged by this club. The plays were performed for the whole night. Ladies' roles continued to be performed by the boys. The pattern of the plays was Shakespearean. Nadim calls these plays 'verse plays' for songs were sung in-between. The music was composed by a talented artist Master Hari Vilas.[6] The metrical prose dialogues were declaimed rather than spoken as dialogues. It was in 1928 when the first Kashmiri play, *Satech Kahwat* authored by Nand Lal Kaul (mandloo), was staged at Rugh Nath Mandir Temple at Srinagar. It dealt with the theme of self-sacrifice of Harishchandra for truth, and followed the pattern of Urdu plays.

The Saraswati Club was followed by National Dramatic Club and Kashmir Dramatic Club. Betab's *Patni Pratap*, staged by Kashmir Dramatic Club, saw ladies performing the female roles for the first time. It was the last performance given by Kashmir Dramatic Club.[7] For a while there was little dramatic activity; only short humorous skits were performed by scattered groups of artistes. They were usually in demand on marriage ceremonies. The Sanatan Dharam Sabha remained active in holding Ram Leelas during the Dussehra.

KASHMIR THEATRICAL COMPANY

Kashmir Theatrical Company[8] was floated by a group of Kashmiri Pandit artistes who had separated from Punjabi Theatre. The stage was near National Hospital, Dewan Bagh, and active members included veteran artistes like Madhav Dass (Zaindar Mohalla), Ved Lal Dhar Vakil, (Zaindar Mohalla), Kashi Nath Bhan (Khardoori/Sheshyar), Shambhoo Nath Bhan (Purushyar), Shambhoo Nath Koul (Zaindar Mohalla), Mohammad Shaban known as Shaban Kachur (Maisuma), Sham Lal Labroo alias Rangaroo

(Zaindar Mohalla), Jagan Nath Saqi, Shambhoo Nath Ogra (Budhgaer), Sudama Ji Koul (Zaindar mohalla), Madhav Punjabi (Sathu), Krishan Joo Bhan, Radha Krishan Barbooza (Safriyar), Prem Nath Jattu (Ganpatyar), Abdul Satar Asi (Khardoori mohalla) and Mohammad Shafi Mir. Shaban and Mir were dancers while Labroo acted on stage.

Shambhoo Nath Koul had a melodious voice. He was a versatile singer who could sing Kashmiri and Hindi songs with equal ease. Whenever he sang in public gatherings big crowds would gather.[9] Old timers still recall his recital of Madhav Dass's *Sudamacharitra* at Somyar temple. Good singing fetched Koul a job in State Forest Department.

Madhav Dass (1906-1974), father of artistes Trilok Dass and Girdhari Dass, took part in dramas in 1926.He played varied roles in plays like *Prahlad Bhagat, Chandrawali, King Lear, Krishan Sudama, Merchant of Venice, Mirabai* and *Romeo and Juliet.* Dass was introduced to the theatre by Ved Lal Dhar Vakil. Madhav Dass, Ved Lal Dhar Vakil, Kashyap Bandhu and Shambhoo Nath Ogra were colleagues in 1920s in the State Revenue Department. They were intimate friends. They had been active in Pandit reform and protest movements like widow remarriage, use of the saree and Roti Agitation. Madhav Dass wrote devotional poetry also. Every Saturday he would go to Hari Parbat to sing leelas and bhajans. All that Madhav Dass had composed during his years as poet was lost when fire engulfed Dass's house in 1981. He had prodigious memory and could narrate the entire 80-page script impromptu. On occasions he played upon the Dilruba. Madhav Dass commanded respect from junior artistes as well, who would often invite him at the time of grand rehearsals. He was the judge at different occasions when the plays were being enacted.

Ved Lal Dhar Vakil was a good artiste who challenged the social mores of his time. He had a stint in acting at Alfred Theatre, a Parsi theatrical company, in Calcutta. After his return he joined Saraswati Club. Plays staged by this club were directed by him. Dhar had great passion for classical music. He would attend parties where artistes from outside, nautch girls and ghazal singers gave performances. These artistes used to stay in houseboats. He was rich and often played host to the guest artistes at his home. Dhar also tried his hand at the Sarang. In later years he joined Radio Kashmir.[10]

Kashmir Theatrical Company mainly staged plays which had social

reform and patriotism as their themes. On occasions even comic plays were staged. After a while this theatre group went into hibernation. Some of the artistes of this dramatic club started Karan Dramatic Club and used the stage at Dewan Bagh. The artistes of the two dramatic clubs joined hands with Samaj Sudhar Samiti in 1944 to float Natak Vibhag.

After 1938 stage activity became popular in institutions like S.P. College and Vasanta Girls School. S.P. College Amateur Dramatic Club brought new life into theatre by staging a number of plays, despite strong social opposition. Vasanta Girls School went a step further and successfully staged features in Kashmiri verse.[11] Madhov Lal Tikoo, Som Nath Sumbly, Kedar Sharma (Kari), Mohan Lal Aima, Pushkar Bhan and Pran Kishore were active in S. P. College Dramatic Club. Kedar Sharma played Anarkali in a play.

Sarwanand Gurtoo had been active in theatre since the first decade of 20th Century. He and some Kashmiris had acted in a play that was enacted in Ladakh in 1904. Gurtoo was those days serving in Revenue Department there. He told an interviewer that he had acted in two Shakespeare's plays.[12] He had the Urdu translations of many Shakespeare's plays in his library. Even when he was past eighty he would speak out the dialogues of these plays without blemish. Gurtoo acted in a play with Pushkar Bhan.[13] It is not known if Gurtoo was a member of the Saraswati Dramatic Club or the Kashmir Theatrical Company.

NATAK VIBHAG

Samaj Sudhar Samiti was launched in early 1940s to take up the cause of social reform among Kashmiri Pandits. Dr Gopi Krishan was the spirit and inspiration behind it. At the inaugural function Dr. Kailash Nath Katjoo was present. Natak Vibhag was founded as its cultural wing in 1944 to build up social awareness against the ills plaguing the society. The Pandit community was facing problems like dowry, big *baraats*, lavish feasts and extravagant expenditure on social customs. Moreover, in the absence of radio the people had no means of entertainment. Natak Vibhag had to serve the twin objectives of entertainment and social reform. Many of the leading lights of Natak Vibhag had been active participants in the Pandit community's Roti Agitation in 1932, social reform movement, widow remarriage and economic austerity on social customs. They had also been among the pioneers in Kashmir's theatre movement 1928 onwards. The

plays staged by Natak Vibhag had a strong social message.

Sudhar Samiti rented out premises at Sheetalnath to stage dramas. It had no link with Yuvak Sabha which too had its headquarters there.

Natak Vibhag staged plays in Hindi and Kashmiri which were based on Puranic tales, mythology and history. Well-known plays staged by it included *Akanandun, Vishwamitr, Satraat, Satech Kahawat, Satyavan Savitri, Krishan Janam, Prahlad Bhagat, Aulad, Samaj Ki Bhool, Chitra, Vidhwa, Habba Khatoon, Kashmir Hamara Hai* and *Shaheed Sherwani.* The plays were received well by the audience. The entry was by ticket and an actor had the option to take one guest free.

Natak Vibhag plays were directed mainly by Kashi Nath Bhan. Ved Lal Dhar Vakil and Madhov Lal Tikoo also directed some plays. Plays were written by Sudama Ji Koul and Badri Nath Koul. The latter wrote *Taramati Harishchander* and other plays from 1944 till 1947. In some of these ML Kemmu acted and danced as well. *Vidhwa* was written by Abdul Satar Asi.

Kashmir Hamara Hai, the play staged by Natak Vibhag, became very popular. *Shaheed Sherwani*, scripted by Prem Nath Pardesi and directed by Ved Lal Dhar Vakil, was staged at National School, Karan Nagar. In this play the artist GR Santosh acted as Sherwani while his neighbour and fellow-artist Nissar Aziz Beg played the role of a tribal raider.

Natak Vibhag had to shift from Sheetalnath to Shivala as the landlord felt uncomfortable due to the huge rush of the people who thronged to watch the plays. Besides Sheetalnath, there were spaces for enacting plays at Rainawari, Amira Kadal and Baramulla. Soon after shifting from Sheetalnath, Natak Vibhag had staged *Swaal* in a big tent. The play was written by Ved Lal Dhar Vakil. Two dance dramas *Shiv Tandav* (1957) and *Gouri Tandav* (1958) were produced by ML Kemmu under the guidance of Master Jagar Nath Shivpuri.

Natak Vibhag actors were good. They played the roles of females also. Talented actors included Mahender Wali, Madhov Lal Tikoo, Ved Lal Dhar Vakil, Suraj Tiku and Som Nath Sumbly. Satar Asi and Yasmeen Kashmiri wrote songs for the plays *Aulad* and *Vidhwa.* Sumbly's humility and outstanding talent was an asset. He started acting in 1944 when he was a college student and remained actively involved in theatre till his last days. Though trained in old school Sumbly was quick to adapt himself to the new trends required in

contemporary modern theatre. Natak Vibhag suffered a major setback when most of its artistes got employment in the Ordinance Department. There were few artistes left to conduct routine theatrical activity.

KAROD TIRATH DRAMATIC CLUB

This theatre club started in Baramulla in early 1940s.The moving spirit behind this was Moti Lal Kuchroo.The other active members included Nand Lal Bali, Madsudan Bali and Som Nath Pandita.It staged *Kangar* in 1946 and *Harishchander* in 1952.The club used to stage Parsi plays regularly.

OTHER ARTISTES

Two personalities who merit attention as promoters of the theatre before 1947 include Prof. Mehmood, the then Principal of Amar Singh College and Rugh Nath Rangaroo alias Rugh Rathi. Prof. Mehmood was actively associated with theatre in Kashmir. His father, an army officer, used to be active in holding Raas Leelas. Prof. Mehmood was a good friend of Kashi Nath Bhan and admired his skills in set designing.

Rugh Nath was a peon in S. P. College. He used to erect stages. He would always be ready to assist and lend advice for erecting stage. During the setting of an open air stage he fractured one of his legs and finally succumbed to the injuries.[14]

Gopi Nath known as Gupa Bacha was in great demand during Mehendiraat functions. He was a good actor and dancer. He performed Gor, Krishan, Gosain, Batni and madman in *Paathers* having a single character. ML Kemmu describes Gopi Nath as a 'superb performer, master of expressions, comic as well as tragic.'[15]

Jagar Nath Boni (Raina) and Arjun Nath Bhat, both teachers at National High School, were actively involved in performing arts. Boni taught dance while Bhat would teach recitation, singing and acting. The latter was killed by raiders in Baramulla in 1947.

KALA KENDRA (K.K.)

Kala Kendra theatre started in 1950. Sudhar Samiti's Cultural Wing Natak Vibhag had already generated enough enthusiasm among the Pandit youth. By 1950 Natak Vibhag had started losing ground. A new generation of theatre artistes had arrived on the scene. They had higher aspirations and were impatient. Natak Vibhag found itself handicapped

to respond to their urges. A group of upcoming artistes including HN Gurtoo, Rattan Lal Razdan, Chuni Lal Razdan, Pyare Lal Razdan, Krishen Langoo, Girdhari Dass and others launched a new theatre group, Kala Kendra. CL Churangoo was also among the founder members of Kala Kendra. Some of the artistes of Natak Vibhag decided to work for Kala Kendra while others faded out. Omkar Nath Khazanchi played a key role in its launch.

Initially Kala Kendra rented out a room in Prem SangeetNiketan building at Kralkhud. Its founder President was ON Khazanchi and CL Churangoo functioned as its secretary. The founding members raised personal contributions to buy initial paraphernalia for the theatre. Subsequently, Kala Kendra artistes put up donation boxes on the roadside and raised funds during marriages.

In the beginning no original plays were available. Only short plays with mythological themes were staged. One such play *Shiva Lagan* was staged at Rainawari in which Jawahar Lal Sadhu and Makhan Lal Sadhu acted. The first scriptwriter for Kala Kendra was Dina Nath Madrer, resident of Kralkhud. Though a matriculate, yet he emerged as a prolific creative playwright for Kala Kendra. Girdhari Dass remarks: "Dina Nath, who scripted *Habba Khatoon,* wrote powerful dialogues which would shake the stage. He also wrote scripts for many religious dramas."

In course of time Kala Kendra enrolled many more artistes. HN Gurtoo brought some of his colleagues in the Ordinance Department, who had flair for acting, to Kala Kendra. They included Radhey Nath Nehru, Janki Nath Bhan and Badri Nath Sher. Bhan (resident of Nunar) was the first director for Kala Kendra. He was replaced by Trilok Dass who had returned from Madras. Janki Nath was a good playwright and wrote *Tabeer-i-Khawab* (Essence of Dream). This play was staged at the Biscoe School Auditorium. Tagore Hall was still under construction then. However, the school was a poor substitute for regular theatre. Kala Kendra's another production was *Chandra Gupta Maurya.*

The joining of the erstwhile Natak Vibhag artistes like Trilok Dass, Madhov Lal Tikoo, Suraj Tiku, Som Nath Sumbly and Kashi Nath (not Bhan) strengthened Kala Kendra. Kashi Nath was a talented actor and played the role of Lord Shiva once. When Trilok Dass returned from Madras Natak Vibhag was virtually defunct. There was paucity of artistes. Discipline too had slackened. Nobody listened to Kashi Nath Bhan. Another theatre group was being run by Shambhoo Nath Bhat Yasmeen.

The emblem of Kala Kendra was designed by Suraj Tiku.

Soon Kala Kendra started looking for a better place. At the request of Dr. Gopi Krishan it agreed to shift to Shivala premises in 1954 on two conditions. One was that Kala Kendra artistes would work under Kala Kendra banner only. Secondly, Sudhar Samiti would not impose any decision on it. Expanded Kala Kendra had its new president, Som Nath Sumbly, while CL Churangoo continued to function as secretary.

Kala Kendra's first success came when the then Prime Minister, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, asked it to stage the play *Son Gaam* (Our Village). The play was to highlight Government's developmental achievements. It was staged at many places in the countryside and fetched good revenue for the club. Besides, Kala Kendra staged plays on religious and cultural festivals.

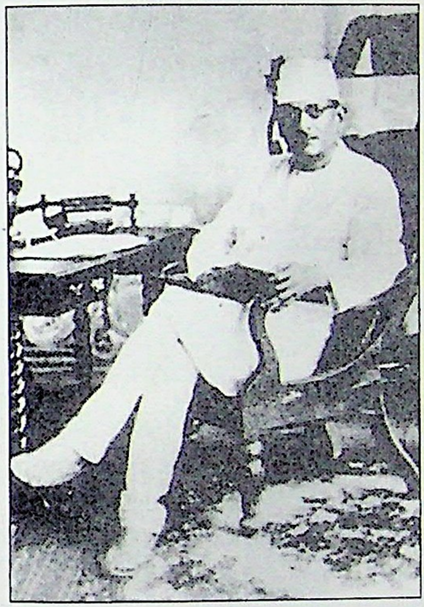
By now Cultural Academy had started functioning. It began organising annual festivals and would pay Rs. 300-500 for approved plays. KK had maximum participation in these festivals. It staged plays at Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla and Sopore. Plays were either in Kashmiri or Hindustani.

Plays like *Lol Fun Te Funkar, Aram Haram Hai* and *Mangoo* got good publicity for Kala Kendra. This theatre troupe also staged plays for jawans at Badami Bagh Cantonment and other places. Impressed with the role KK was playing, GM Sadiq, the then Education Minister asked Cultural Academy to be extragenerous in helping KK. He told the Academy: "What work you should have been doing is being done by a private club."[16]

Contribution of KK to theatre movement in Kashmir remains unrivalled. Half of the staff of Song and Drama Division, Srinagar, was appointed on the recommendation of KK. In fact, Song and Drama Division was started by KK artistes. Every good actor and artiste from Kashmir has a Kala Kendra link, viz, Krishen Langoo (Music), Upender Khashu (Acting), Makhan Lal Saraf (Acting), Ashok Jailkhani (Acting), MK Raina (Theatre), Bansi Kaul (Theatre), MP Sharma (of Jammu), Suraj Tiku (Acting) and HN Gurtoo (Acting and Make-up). State Information Department and other local clubs had members who had been associated with KK.

Kala Kendra would publish brochures regularly and stage a new play annually. Set designing for the plays was done by Suraj Tiku, while

Parsi Theatre Playwrights



Aga Hashar Kashmiri
(Courtesy: Natya Shodh Sansthan)



Narayan Prasad Betab
(Courtesy: Natya Shodh Sansthan)

Noted Kashmiri Playwrights



Moti Lal Kemmu



Ali Mohammad Lone



Sajood Sailani



Hari Krishan Kaul



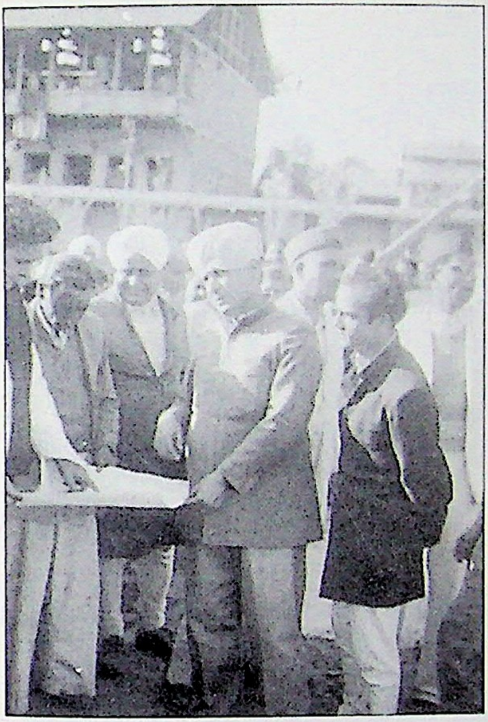
Bhushan Betab



Gauri Shankar Raina



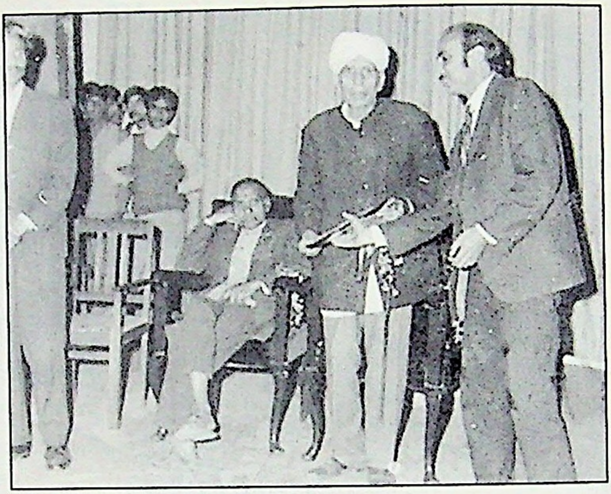
Dr. Sohan Lal Koul



1952:
Shridhar Dhar, a senior member of Sudhar Samiti making a point to Prithviraj Kapoor at Shivala, Srinagar. Seen in the photograph are Suraj Tiku (extreme right) and Dr. Gopi Krishan Handoo (3rd from right), President Sudhar Samiti.



Dr. Gopi Krishan taking Prithviraj Kapoor on a round of Shivala. Suraj Tiku is seen on extreme left.



Sarwanand Gurtoo (2nd from right) being honoured at Kala Kendra function in 1971



Madhov Lal Tiku receiving Kala Kendra Shield from Mohammad Yusuf Taing, while Som Nath Sumbli (centre) looks on.



Madhov Lal Tiku speaking at the Kala Kendra Shield ceremony. Seen in the photograph are Makhan Lal Koul (left), Secretary Kashmir Theatre Federation and Pyare Lal Razdan (2nd from left).



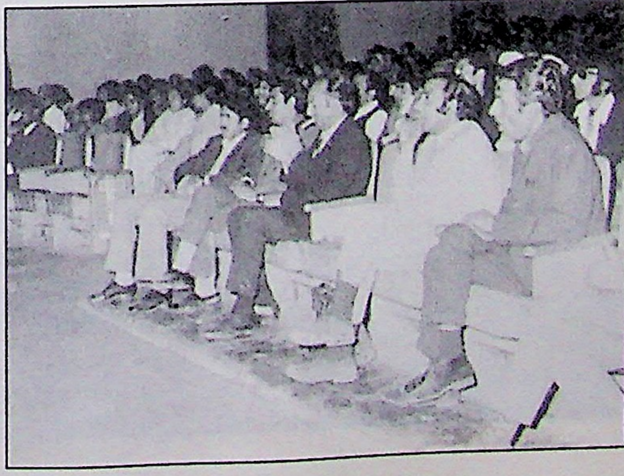
Madhav Dass



Trilok Dass



Kedar Dass Sharma coming down from the stage after receiving Kala Kendra Shield. He is being helped by Pran Kishore (left)



A view of the audience at the Kala Kendra Shield ceremony. Seen in this photograph is Ali Mohammad Lone (front row, 3rd from right), the noted playwright.

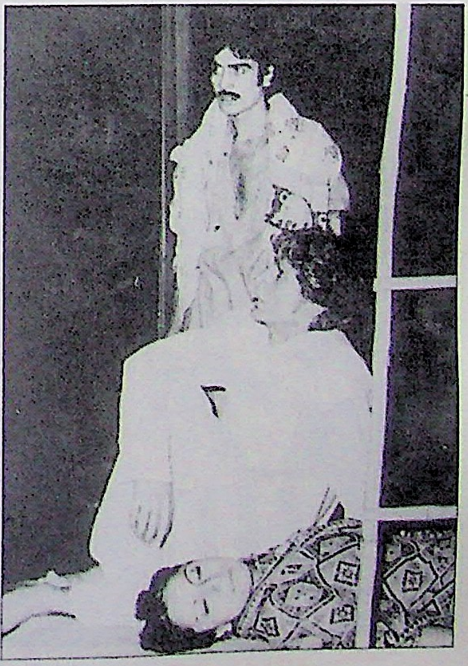


1971: A group photograph of veteran artists with Kala Kendra staff after the awarding of Kala Kendra Shield ceremony.
Ist row: (from left) Piyare Lal Razdan, Mohammad Shaban, Madhov Lal Tiku, Chaman Lal Churangoo, Ghulam Mohammad Qalinbaf, GR Renzu, Dina Nath Nadim, Raj Begum, Mohammad Yusuf Taing, Ved Lal Dhar Vakil, Prem Nath Jattu and Laxmi Narayan Koul
2nd row: (from left): Suraj Tiku, Som Nath Sumbli and Trilok Dass.



A group photograph of Kala Kendra Artistes at Srinagar (1959). Seen in this photograph are: (Sitting 1st row)- ON Gursu Ibn Adam (extreme left), PL Handoo (2nd from L), Pyare Lal Razdan (extreme right), (Sitting 2nd row)- Prana Shangloo (2nd from L), Brijkishori Nakhasi (4th from L), Suraj Tiku (5th from L), Krishen Langoo (6th from L), Trilok Dass (7th from L), Ali Mohmmad Lone (8th from L), Moti Lal Kuchroo (5th from R), Girdhari Dass (3rd from R), Madhov Lal Tikoo (2nd from R) and Som Nath Sumbly (extreme right). Standing: Rattan Lal Bhan (7th from L), CL Churangoo (8th from L), Bushan Lal Bangroo (11th from L), ON Khazanchi (10th from R) and HN Gurtoo (9th from R).

(Photo courtesy: PL Handoo)



A scene from a Theatre Workshop organised by National School of Drama. Seen in this photogragh are Latif Binny, Ravi Kemmu and Asha Zaroo



Kashmir Theatre Federation Festival, 1975, Award Winners
(Standing L-R): Moti Lal Kharoo, Bharti Zaroo, Sajood Sailani, Som Nath Sumbly, Pushkar Bhan, HN Gurtoo, Pran Kishore, Makhan Lal Koul, Ashok Jailkhani, Veena Gaind and Moti Lal Kuchroo.
(Sitting L-R): Abdul Gani (Light Operator), Ravi Tiku, Ashok Zafrani.



A group of artistes who acted in the play *Hero Machama* (1982). Seen in this photograph (L-R): Santosh Tiku, Abdul Gani (Light operator), Hira Lal Razdan, Mohmmad Shafi (Sitting): Anjana Bawa (L) and Satish Razdan (R)



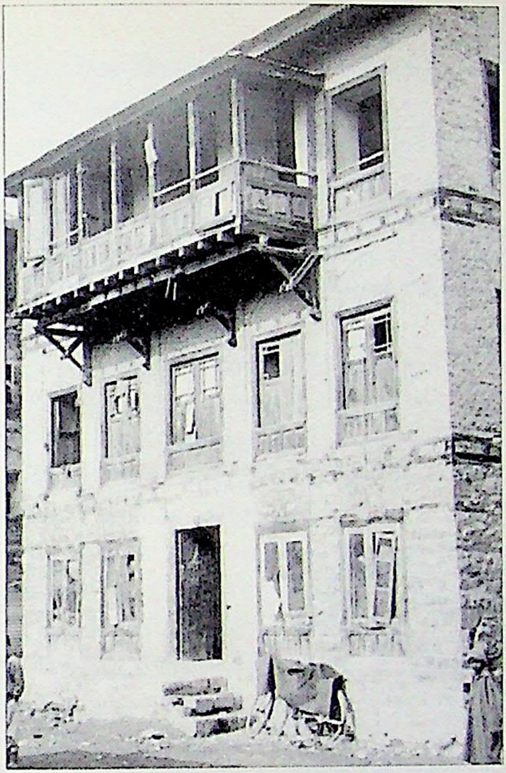
A group photograph of artistes who acted in the play *Suray ki antim kiran se Suray ki pehli kiran tak* (1978). Seen in this photograph (Standing L-R): Ashok Jailkhani, Kulbhushan Wantoo, Ashok Zafrani, Maharaj Krishan Shah, Ramesh Raina, Mushtaq Ali Ahmed, Santosh Tiku and Mr. Shah (Sitting L-R): Dolly, Kshemender Raina and Asha Zaroo



Ravi Tiku receiving Best Child Artiste Award from Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the then Chief Minister (J&K).



Artistes with Som Nath Sadhu Trophy and Child Short Play Competition Trophies (Standing L-R): Suresh Raina, Ramesh Raina, Rajesh Kaw, Satish Razdan, Santosh Tiku, Sunil Dhar and Maharaj Krishen Raina.



Tikus' house at Sheelteng, Habbakadal, Srinagar. The photograph of the house was taken in 2008.



An old photograph of Tiku family, taken in 1908 at Mekhal (Yagneopavit) ceremony. Seen in this photograph is Kailash Ram Tiku, grandfather of Suraj, holding Mekhala Maharaza on his left side. Also seen in this photograph is a newly married child couple (3rd & 4th from right)



Shridhar Joo Tiku



Madhov Lal Tiku



Suraj Tiku

Trilok Dass directed the plays. Make-up was done by Suraj Tiku initially and was later taken up by HN Gurtoo.

Initially, the dialogues were in verse. Gradually, the artistes became more professional. For every play a select committee would decide the cast. *Taentkor* and *Tsaya* were very well received. The latter was also staged at Kashmiri Samiti in Delhi and on the roadside. Most of the plays were in Urdu while some were in Kashmiri. Each play had an interlude in which a new set was created.

Kala Kendra introduced KK shield for the first time on 9th October, 1972 on its annual day to award veteran stage artistes. On this occasion *Graduate Pagal* was staged at Tagore Hall. Awards were given after reading the citation. Then the veteran artiste would answer questions put to him by the audience. The public would also be asked to point out any inaccuracies in the citation. Veteran artistes who received KK shields included Ved Lal Dhar Vakil, Prem Nath Jattu, Mohammad Shaban, Sudama Ji Koul, Ghulam Mohammad Qalinbaf, Ali Mohammad Lone, Raj Begum, Sarwanand Gurtoo, Madhav Lal Tikoo and others. PN Jattu was a good actor as well as a writer of devotional poetry.

Trilok Dass (1931-2000) was a good teacher of acting. He would sit the whole night to motivate and train artistes. Dass had sound grasp of the psychological dimensions of the play and taught his colleagues intricacies in dialogue delivery and scene appreciation. He was not a playwright but he had the creative insight to take out the kernel from the script for the play. He got an award for *Bina Divaron Ke Ghar*.

Dass had started his career in Veterinary Department as Head Assistant. Prem Nath Koul, his friend, was closely associated with him at Kala Kendra. Trilok had shifted to Madras where he got a role in the movie *Mr. Sampat*, produced by Gemini Productions. He fell out with his bosses and floated his own production. This did not work. He returned to Srinagar. *Hamara Gaon* was the first play he directed on his return to Srinagar.

Trilok Dass had a face that suited the role of a villain—broad eyes and good voice. He understood the theatre well and acted flawlessly. This made him a competent director. Since he concentrated on direction, he did not get much opportunity to act. He acted in three or four plays. His best role was in *Taentkor*, the role that suited him in terms of age, looks, expression and performance. In *Aram Haram Hai* and *Taentkor* Trilok Dass performed the twin roles of director and actor, and got awards for these. He also acted in *Tsaya*. He was fond of reading novels but did not know much

about music.

OTHER THEATRE GROUPS

For nearly a decade Kala Kendra virtually functioned as the sole theatre group. Abhinav Bharti, a wing of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, was launched in 1957 to stage plays. As KK faced exodus of its artistes for varying reasons new theatre groups continued to emerge from 1964. The first among these were NavRang Dramatic Club (1964), RungManch (1967), Sangam Theatre(1967), Royal Theatre, Anantnag (1967), National Theatre, Budgam (1967), Wullar Theatre (1968) and Vasant Theatre (1969). In the 1970s many more dramatic clubs came up, viz, Kameshwar Kendra (1970), Himalaya Theatre (1971), Sangarmaal (1971), Kamal Theatres (1971), Art Theatre (1971), Shah Dramatic Club (1971), Punjabi Rangmanch (1972), Pragash Dramatic Club (1972), Novrattan Natsaar (1973), Shaheen Theatres (1972), Kashmir Theatre (1973), Kalidass Dramatic Club(1974), Kashmir Valley Theatre (1976) and Stagecraft (1982). In June 1974 many theatre groups joined hands to launch Kashmir Theatre Federation under the Presidentship of Pran Kishore for staging plays.

In June, 1979, in connection with the International Year of Child three theatre groups, viz, RungManch, Abhinav Bharati and Kamal Theatres collaborated to organise Children Short Play Competition at Tagore Hall. RungManch Theatre made a pioneering contribution by taking local theatre troupe to Bombay. Subsequently, other theatre groups also moved out to stage plays at Delhi, Allahabad and Calcutta.

CULTURAL FRONT

Local chapter of Indian People's Theatre Association, IPTA, was formed by KA Abbas in Kashmir in 1945. Its main objective was to promote theatre which would focus on the problems of the common people. Prem Nath Pardesi and Thakur Poonchi, both of whom later joined Radio Kashmir, were associated with it.

National Cultural Front was started in 1947 by Dina Nath Nadim and other writers. It roped in writers, poets, musicians and painters to give new direction to culture and link it with the day-to-day problems faced by the Kashmiris. Chaman Lal Chaman, Ali Mohammad Lone, Pran Kishore, Dwarka Nath Bakaya, Sham Lal Bakaya, Mohan Lal Aima,

GR Santosh, Prem Nath Pardesi, Aziz Haroon, Noor Mohammad Roshan and Arjan Dev Majboor also were actively associated with it. The music unit comprised Abdul Ghani Namthali, Habibullah Rabab Nawaz, Zoona Begum, Raj Begum and some others.[17]

A few non-Kashmiri artistes Shivdan Singh Chouhan and Sheila Bhatia (IPTA) also contributed to the efforts of the Cultural Front. Sheila Bhatia introduced the concept of Shadow Play.[18] *Naye Kashmir Ki Rah Par, Kashmir Yeh Hai, Swali, Teen Bolta Char, Chor Bazar, Dollar Sahib* and *Viz Chi Saney* were staged between 1954 and 1955.

Cultural Front played a patriotic role by promoting social unity and keeping up the morale of the Kashmiris in the most trying conditions. The musician Mohan Lal Aima observes:

> "The artistes kept up the morale of the Kashmiris and inspired them to rise and hit back at the raiders who had reached the outskirts of Srinagar. The patriotic songs sung by the musicians in the streets and lanes and the huge paintings drawn by painters depicting the atrocities of the raiders strengthened the determination of the Kashmiris to fight the raiders."[19]

A permanent stage was erected within a few weeks and plays like *Kashmir Yeh Hai, Shaheed Sherwani* and *Swali* became quite popular.

About their technique Aima remarks:

> "The technique of these performances demonstrated a blend of the old and the modern stage. The present day influences of the western theatre, the lighting, 3-dimensional sets and the playback effects were also used to some extent."

DN Nadim introduced opera by writing *Bombur Ta Yemberzal* (Bumble Bee and Narcissus). The story is based on a folklore that the two, though in love with each other, never meet in life. This opera was directed by Mohan Lal Aima and staged at Nedous Hotel and S.P. College. The music was based on folk tunes and was well orchestrated. Dwarka Nath Bakaya played Bombur, Pran Kishore Giltoor, Pushkar Bhan Harud, Mohan Lal Aima Toofan, and Zoona Begum Yemberzal. GR Santosh, Girdhari Dass, Omkar Nath and ML Kemmu were flowers. The musical had exquisite poetry, 'Bambro Bambro Shamrang Bambroo...!' became a hit song. The opera was well received by the people. Nadim's imagery was outstanding. Kemmu made Indrani Rehman, the great Bharatnatyam danceuse, to dance on one of the songs of the opera at Tagore Hall in 1964. Moti Lal Kemmu remarks that *Bombur Ta Yemberzal* gave back to the

Kashmiris their Gyavan Paather[20] (Geet Natya). Nadim had watched *White Haired Girl* in China. He was inspired to write one in Kashmiri. In 1955 M.Bulganin and N.Khruschev, the Russian leaders, visited Srinagar. *Bombur Ta Yemberzal* was staged for them.

Hemal Nagray was presented at Nedous Hotel in September, 1956 at *Jashn Kashmir* Festival. Written by Nadim and Noor Mohammed Roshan, dances were choreographed by ML Kemmu. He presented two dance programmes named Rhythm of the Dal Lake and used poems of Nadim, Chaman and Beikas. Many years later the same play, writen by Kemmu himself, was staged by Wullar Theatre. It ran into hundreds of shows.

Rava Rupee was composed by Amin Kamil in 1955 but could not be staged. Opera *Neki Badi* was composed and staged that year. Nadim composed four other operas—*Meghdoot* (based on Kalidas' poem), *Shihil Kul* (based on the theme of national integration), *Safar ta Shejaar* and *Vyeth*. *Shihil Kul* was staged while the other three were broadcast from Radio Kashmir. At the instance of Dhanwantri, the communist leader, virile dance forms like Bhangra of Jammu was integrated with Kashmiri forms. *Land to the Tiller*, a Bhangra ballet, composed by Nadim in 1949 was staged with success.[21] Another opera *Gulrez*, based on the *masnavi* of Maqbool Shah Kralwari, was composed by GR Santosh and broadcast from Radio Kashmir.

Except for *Hemal Nagray* and *Gulrez* all other operas were based on symbolic technique with the Kashmir landscape serving as a live dimension to the themes. The characters were drawn from among the flowers, the song birds, the breezes, the trees, the rivers and the lakes of the Kashmir. There were lilting folk tunes and the cadence of soft *Rof* style steps.[22]

Plays written by the Cultural Front playwrights were staged regularly for sometime. The plays focussed on the life of people in general and addressed broader issues. Cultural Front suffered a major crisis when it started facing paucity of artistes. Most of them had been absorbed in government departments, University, Cultural Academy and Radio Kashmir.

PROFESSIONALISM IN BHAND PAATHER

Moti Lal Kemmu made a major contribution by introducing professionalism in *Bhand Paather*, Kashmir's folk theatre. Prior to 1947 as a young artiste he had been witness to performances of *Bhandchok* and *Watal Paather*. When Kemmu joined Cultural Academy he made genuine attempts to uplift this theatre. First, he separated vulgarity from Bhand Paather. Next, he laid stress on acting. Kemmu motivated Mohammad

Subhan Bhagat and his party to take up Paather professionally and present Bhand plays. His play *Trunove* was staged at Exhibition Grounds.

Kemmu trained Bhand performers. In 1966 they participated in the J&K Cultural Academy Drama Competition. Akingam Bhand group was the first rural group to present a play in a modern proscenium theatre. Mohammad Subhan Bhagat wrote plays for his party. These plays were staged at Tagore Hall. Ali Mohammad Bhagat, an artiste of Akingam Bhand Theatre, was adjudged as the Best Actor in *Yiti Chhu Banan* (1967) and *Taqdeer* (1968). Earlier, he had received Certificate of Merit for *Sone Wattan*, a one-act play in 1964. The Bhand Theatre got defunct during the ongoing violent conflict in Kashmir. *Bhand Duhaye,* a play which depicts the plight of Bhand artistes during the present turmoil, infused confidence in Bhand artistes to restart Bhand Paather.

PLAYWRIGHTING

Before 1947 plays staged by various dramatic clubs were still evolving in artistic standards and remained confined to limited themes like social reform and mythology. Maturity in thought, eloquence and variety in themes came only after 1960.

Moti Lal Kemmu describes four trends in Kashmiri playwrighting after 1947,viz, musical operas (*Bombur Ta Yemberzal* and *Vitasta*), folk plays (*Manzil Niku, Haram Khanuk Aina, Mangay* and *Mantini Legi Panzoo)*, experimental plays (*But Ta Buldozer, Lal Bu Drayas Lol Re, Natuk Kariv Bandh* and *Chare Pathar*) and comic plays with social content (*Chapath, Grand Rehearsal, Kani Shechey* and *Roopyi Rood*).

Nand Lal Kaul alias Nanna (1877-1940) was a poet and perhaps the first playwright among the Kashmiris in the 20th century. He wrote *Satech Kahawat* (The Touchstone of Truth), *Prahlad Bhagat, Ramun Raj, Paz Pativarata* and *Dayun Lol.* Many of his plays were Kashmiri renderings from Urdu and were done excellently. His plays were staged by local dramatic clubs including Natak Vibhag of Sudhar Samiti. *Satech Kahawat,* based on Puranic tale of Satya Harishchander, continued to be staged till 1955. It was Nanna's first play.

Sudama Ji Koul and Badri Nath Koul were the main playwrights of Natak Vibhag. Other playwrights of this phase include Tarachand Trisal Bismil (*Premch Kahawat, Akanandun, Ramavtar* and *Pazech Kahwat*), Prof. Mohi-ud-Din Hajini (*Grees Sund Ghara*)and Prem Nath Pardesi (*Quddus Gojwari* and *Batahar*).*Pazech Kahawat* was staged by Karod Tirath Dramatic Club, Baramulla.

After 1947 Kashmir produced good playwrights for theatre and radio.

They include Dina Nath Madrer, Moti Lal Kemmu, Ali Mohammad Lone, Sajood Sailani, Bansi Nirdosh, Hari Krishan Kaul, Dr Shankar Raina, Bhushan Betab, Hriday Kaul Bharti, Ghulam Rasool Santosh, Pushkar Bhan, Som Nath Sadhu, Amin Kamil, Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din, Som Nath Zutshi, Dr. Sohan Lal Koul, Bashir Dada, Bhushan Lal Bhushan, Avtar Krishan Razdan, JK Koul Bezan, Makhan Lal Saraf, Makhan Lal Koul, Zahid Hussain, Amin Shakir, Shahid Budgami, Shamas-ud-Din Shamim and Zahid Mukhtar. Triloki Nath Vaishnavi Rafiq wrote two plays in Kashmiri which had titles in Hindi. These were *Chitar* and *Samaj Ki Bhool.* Nazir Josh, associated with National Theatre Budgam, wrote popular comic plays like *Tim Gori Gayi, Mateel* and *Hazar Dastan.* JN Wali wrote *Zoon* (Habba Khatoon) in 1950. Sarwanand Bhan encouraged young playwrights to write on burning social topics of the day. *Aulad* and some other plays were written and presented under his guidance.

Dina Nath Madrer and Sudhama Ji Koul wrote plays in Parsi style. Famous plays of Ali Mohammed Lone include *Suyya, Ta'ez'y Baten'y Kan, Takdirsaaz, Jheel Bula Rahi Hai, Adam Hawa Te Iblees, Vyeth Rooz Pakan, Chinar and Durlab Pandit.* He has written over 150 plays in Urdu and Kashmiri, most of which were meant for radio. Lone wrote the screenplay and the dialogues for the first Kashmiri film *Ma'enziraat. Viz Chhe Sa'en'y,* a play written by Lone, was staged by Cultural Conference for the first time on a mobile stage in Kashmir in 1955.

Pushkar Bhan wrote a series of comic plays called *Hero Machama.* He also scripted *Waktuk Lukman.* Som Nath Sadhu wrote over fifty plays for radio and stage. His well-known plays include *Chapaath, Grand Rehearsal, Ye Zahar Kus Chey, Payimaesh, Nav Nosh* and *Riyazoun Mole.* Som Nath Sadhu's plays were staged at Delhi and Bombay and bagged many awards. Som Nath Sadhu's *Birbal,* a historical play, was the first attempt in the form. He and Pushkar Bhan jointly wrote *Research,* which was staged at Tagore Hall. The play bagged an award.

Moti Lal Kemmu wrote his first play *Mangay* in December 1963. He continues to write plays in which characters and locale are drawn from Kashmir history. His well-known plays include *Tsaya, Manzil Niku, Laila Majnoo, Zin-e-Mazoor, Trunove, Dhak Yeli Tsalan, Hawas, Shah Paather, Nagar Udase, Lal Ba Drayas Lol Rey, Natak Truche, Tota ta Aina, Shaap, Akanandun, Haram Khanuk Aina, Kansi Ma Rovmut Hai Kya Gom* and *Hemal Nagray.*

Sajood Sailani wrote *Shuhul Nar, Gatarean, Tratabuzun, Rata Kreel, Roopyi Rood, Kajey Raat, Gashi Taruk, Yeth Naras Kus Kari Chheta* and *Wutra-e-Bunyal.* Ghulam Rasool Santosh's famous plays include *Akanandun* and *But Ta Buldozer.*

Bhushan Betab and Prof. Hari Krishan Kaul have contributed substantially to playwrighting. For theatre Betab wrote *Bareh Gaye Yemberzal, Guil Te Khaar, Mayi Manz Tchai, Beyi Phaet Baman, Lalwun Amaar, Gaeth Laej Aabus Saen Gaye Aavlen, Taembur Tchi Aalav ti* and *Bus Akh Khwaab.* He also scripted two plays in Hindi: *Baji Shehnai* and *Amar Shaheed.* Bhushan Betab wrote *Mayi Manz Tchai* and *Trik Vaet* for radio. Prof. Hari Krishan Kaul's famous plays include *Dastaar, Yeli Wattan Khur Chu Yivan* and *Natuk Kariv Bandh.*

Mohammed Subhan Bhagat, Ghulam Rasool Bhagatyar and Radha Krishan Braroo have distinuished themselves as playwrights in folk style. Mohammad Subhan Bhagat's plays include *Taqdeer, Yeti Chu Banavun, Poz Apuz, Kani Shechey* and *Mantini Laej Panzoo.* Ghulam Rasool Bhagatyar brought out his collection of plays titled *Civil Kina Sarkari* in 1996. Radha Krishan Braroo wrote two plays in folk style:*Yahoo* and *Reshivar.*

Avtar Krishan Rahbar also wrote a historical play, *Budshah*. His other well-known plays include *Bu Chus Choor, Talash, Aulad* and *Volharish.* Dr Sohan Lal Koul has written many plays for theatre.These include *Shakespeare, Local Taxes Extra,Date of Expiry, Sarkaar, San-31, Cactus* and *Dil Chum Braman Gachah Gara.* He has done adaptation for three plays for theatre. These are Girish Karnad's, *Haiwadan* (*Guir Buth*), Edward Albee's *Zoo Story* (*Chidya Garh*) and Chekov's *Seagull (Bhot Door).* Makhan Lal Saraf's well-known plays for stage include *Ba Vanha Poz* and *Soriy Sabud Raath.* Makhan Lal Koul wrote *Barh Gav Lol.*

Ali Mohammed Lone, Noor Mohammed Roshan, Amin Kamil, Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din, Som Nath Zutshi, DN Nadim and Avtar Krishan Rahbar translated many plays into Kashmiri.

NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA ARTISTES

Most of the actors who worked for theatre in Kashmir did not have any formal training. They learnt acting through a self-learning process. In fact, Sham Lal Dhar Bahar was the first to pass through the portals of National School of Drama (NSD). He was followed by Radha Krishan Braroo, MK Raina, Bansi Koul, KK Raina, Ravi Kemmu, Virender Razdan (who played Vidhur in *Mahabharata*), Chandershekher Raina,Raj Kiran Kaul,Bhawani Bashir and Ashish Nijhon. Sunita Raina and Mujmil Hayat are at present undergoing training at NSD. Braroo was so fond of stage that he is said to have sold family ornaments once to purchase curtains for the stage.

FEMALE ACTORS

In the early phase roles of female were performed by boys. Bal Krishen Qasba, Janki Nath, Girdhari Dass and Chuni Lal Koul (a musician) performed female roles in plays. Pran Kishore used to play female roles in S. P. College during his student days. Before 1947 a enunch, Abdul Gaffar, used to play Draupadi while Mohammed Shaban would perform the roles of enunchs in plays.

Prominent female actors in Kashmir's theatre were Nabla Begum, Prana Shungloo, Brij Kishori Nakhasi, Hafiza Kouser, Bharti Raina, Asha Zaroo, Anjana Bawa (Sood), Shaheena Naqshbandi, Anil Singh, Nancy Ganjoo, Kaki Koul, Jyoti Fotedar, Veena Gaind, Usha Ticku, Reeta Jalali, Shashi Kiran Chabra, Dolly and Ratna. Nabla Begum was one of the few female performers of Radio Kashmir, TV and stage. She defied the social mores of her times to join theatre. As a talented performer she evolved her own style and performed mother's roles in plays with perfection. She was also an inspiration for other female artistes. The roles of matchmakers were played by TN Taploo, SN Sumbly and Pushkar Bhan.

KASHI NATH BHAN—SURAJ TIKU'S GURU

Kashi Nath Bhan was Suraj Tiku's teacher in all the art forms the latter pursued. It was Bhan who spotted great artistic potential in the young Suraj.

Bhan earned name and fame as Kashmir's best set designer. This distinction has, however, overshadowed his other roles— master painter, actor and a competent director. Much of what Bhan painted has been lost due to the vagaries of time. Bansi Lal Dalal, his nephew, was in possession of eighteen or twenty of Bhan's paintings in 1990. When violence broke out in Kashmir he could not carry them to Jammu. There are not many survivors who worked with Bhan or knew him intimately. No written material on him exists either. However, many legends which grew round Bhan continue to survive. It is through these legends that Kashi Nath Bhan emerges as a versatile artist of Kashmir in the 20th century.

FAMILY HISTORY

Kashi Nath Bhan had no family legacy in art. It was sheer hardwork and right instincts that made him a great artist. His father was an ordinary employee in Srinagar Municipality. Kashi Nath Bhan was born at Khardoori Mohalla in Habba Kadal to Dharmchand and Kudmali. No details are available about Kashi Nath's year of birth. He retired from Service either in 1954 or 1955. This suggests that he was born either in 1899 or 1900.

Kashi Nath Bhan had three brothers, Jia Lal, Kishen Kumar and Prem Nath. His two sisters were Satyavati and Chandamali. Initially,

Jia Lal was in construction business and then joined IAF. Kishen Kumar was adopted by Maharaj Krishan Trakroo of Lucknow. He later rose to become a senior judge in Utter Pradesh. Prem Nath received his apprenticeship from Phillips India and served as their service engineer in Kashmir.

Satyavati was married to Ganesh Dass Dalal of Sheshyar in Habba Kadal and Chandamali was married in Tariwala (Raina) family. Satyavati was Ganesh Dass's second wife. His first wife had passed away soon after her marriage. He had also lost two sons, aged 18 and 20, events which had pushed him into severe depression. Kashmiri Pandit society in those days valued close kinship and the joint family ethos. Bhans decided to shift to Dalal's house in order to take care of the family of their daughter. They brought up Satyavati's family with great care and affection. Satyavati's son Bansi Lal fondly recalls: "Till the time of my marriage I did not know that Kashi Nath Bhan was not my father."

SCHOOLING

Kashi Nath Bhan was highly intelligent and, though a matriculate, spoke flawless English. He had his schooling in State Mission School, Fateh Kadal, an institution founded by Sir Tyndale Biscoe. Dynamism and the great discipline that Bhan displayed in his later life and profession were the traits he had inherited from this unique school. The school's motto 'In All Things Be Men' was reflected in Bhan's persona.

Kashi Nath Bhan lacked the resources and opportunity to pursue higher education. Instead, he joined Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute (now State Polytechnic) to pursue Diploma in Fine Arts. It was this right decision that brought out the best in him. He studied at this prestigious art school from 1917 till 1920.

During Andrews' stewardship Kashi Nath Bhan was both a student as well as an instructor (1920-22) at the Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute. Bhan's real teacher in art and drawing was the bucolic JC Mukerji. Bhan continued to hold Mukerji in high regard and would frequently talk about his artistic skills to his family members and others. Mukerji too had high opinion about Bhan's capabilities.

Bhan rejoined this art school in 1940s as an instructor when Mukerji was the principal. Suraj Tiku was Bhan's student here along with Mohan Raina. It was the time when the school had the finest

faculty— Sat Lal Kampassi, Jagar Nath Mattoo, Shiv Nath Raina and Shridhar Tikoo.

ANANTNAG DAYS

Kashi Nath Bhan served at the Govt. Technical Institute, Anantnag from 1922 till 1940. There he brought a revolution in *gabba*-making boosting its sales manifold. His introduction of the patchwork in *gabba*-making was much lauded. It was at the insistence of the public of Anantnag, the main centre of gabba-making, that Bhan was retained for a long time there. A peculiar coir basket used for carrying flowers was another innovation introduced by Kashi Nath Bhan at Anantnag. He also taught application of colours to the local artisans involved in the manufacture of the wooden furniture.

It was at Anantnag that Kashi Nath Bhan discovered Gopi Nath (Gupa Bacha) , who became a rage at Srinagar city's religious and social functions. He had a melodious voice and was a superb performer in *Bhachnagma* genre. Anantnag of Kashi Nath Bhan's time was second major town of Kashmir. But it lacked sources of entertainment for the people. Bhan had started a dramatic club. Gopi Nath was an illiterate young boy who once expressed the desire to act in a play. Bhan told him that it was difficult to assign him any role because he could not speak Urdu. However, Bhan gave him preliminary tips in traditional dancing and assigned him a dancing item in a skit. Gupa Bacha became so popular in so short a time that the audience would not allow him to leave the stage and would ask him to repeat his performances. It was not unusual to hear shouts of 'Gupa...once more.' In later years when Gupa Bacha became an accomplished artiste he continued to acknowledge his debt to Bhan. Once he had been called at the marriage function of Bhan's nephew Bansi Lal Dalal. No sooner did he enter Bhan's house than he fell prostrate at Bhan's feet. Keeping his head between Bhan's two legs Gupa Bacha asked: "How dare I dance before you!?" This was his reverence for Bhan.

KISHTWAR YEARS

Kashi Nath Bhan served at Kishtwar for four years. He also taught art and embroidery to Om Mehta's siblings at their father's insistence. During Ram Leela celebrations it was Bhan's duty to erect the stage. He would also give lessons in acting to the young performers there. Once the stage got destroyed in a fire. Bhan's transfer orders had already come.

Om Mehta requested him to wait and pleaded : 'What will we do without the stage?' Bhan stayed back for a month to complete the stage. Kashi Nath Bhan also acted in a drama in Kishtwar.

ITI, SRINAGAR

Kashi Nath's last posting was at State ITI, Bagh-e-Dilawar Khan, Srinagar. Prithvi Nath Koul *Sayil*, a poet, Jawahar Lal Wanchoo, a set designer and Nissar Aziz Beg, an artist were among his students at this Institute.

Bhan retired from service either in 1954 or1955. According to Sayil he was given a few extensions in lieu of his great services. After retirement Bhan joined Dina Nath Nadim's Lal Ded School at Badiyar as a drawing teacher. He also taught embroidery to the widows there. Bhan helped his friend Amar Nath Kachroo to set up Modern Apliq Works.

THEATRE

Kashi Nath Bhan was among the pioneers in Kashmir's theatre movement in the early 20th century. He was part of a theatre group called Kashmir Theatrical Company. Bhan's association with Kashmir's theatre spanned three decades (1931-1960s). Originally trained as a drawing teacher Bhan proved an asset to the theatre movement by assuming varied roles—acting, set designing and direction. He was the role model for many. He had learnt acting in Parsi theatre which he would attend regularly.

Referring to Bhan's long involvement in theatre Girdhari Lal Dass, himself a theatre artiste, observes: "Kashi Nath Bhan was a jewel among artistes. Bhan would prepare the stage when Madhav Dass was active in theatre. He was still there when Madhav Dass's sons were involved in theatre work. Bhan was a pioneer in the genres of direction and set designing."Moti Lal Kemmu says, "Kashi Nath Bhan knew Parsi Theatre very well. He was a good director and set designer. While watching him directing and painting sets I learnt about theatre arts." Bal Krishen Qasba agrees," In his times Bhan was the only person who knew the art of stagecraft. He was the best in his job."

A good director is identified by two things—the form he follows and the number of good students he produces. If this yardstick holds good Kashi Nath Bhan was a director par excellence. Amar Nath Vaishnavi, Bhan's student at Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute, who frequently

accompanied Bhan on his theatre work says, "Bhan was a good director who performed his role wonderfully well." Did Bhan learn direction from Ved Lal Dhar Vakil? Circumstantial evidence points to that.

Kashi Nath Bhan directed most of the plays staged by Samaj Sudhar Samiti's Natak Vibhag. After 1947 Bhan's canvas widened. He had to direct patriotic plays—some were staged by his own theatre group and some by the newly created Cultural Front. The plays included *Qurbani*, *Kashmir Hamara Hai* and many others. He also designed sets for these plays.

Kashmir Hamara Hai was written by Sudhama Ji Koul and produced by Natak Vibhag. It was directed by Bhan who made the sets also. The play gave one hundred performances between 1948 and 1949 and was shown to Army personnel at the frontier as well. One of the performances was witnessed by Indira Gandhi in Srinagar. It was here that Bhan showed for the first time the landing of an aeroplane on the stage.

In 1948 Gen. Thimaya invited Bhan to host the same play for troops at Badami Bagh Cantonment and at Salamabad, Uri. Bhan had carried his nephew Bansi Lal Dalal along with him to Uri. Dalal recalls:

> When we reached Uri at 5 pm the place was under curfew. Since it was getting late Gen. Thimaya asked Bobji (uncle Bhan) if he could prepare the stage in time. Uncle replied that the stage would be ready by 6:30 pm. When the stage was ready Gen. Thimaya remarked: "I have never seen such energetic people before."

When the show was over visibly happy Gen. Thimaya called Bhan to ask him what he could do for him. True to his selflessness Bhan demanded no personal favours. He said to the General, "All these artistes are unemployed. You can help me by providing jobs to them." The General asked him to report at BB Cantt. the following day. On the recommendation of the General twenty-two artistes received appointment orders for the Ordinance wing of the Army.

ACTING

Strenuous task of direction and set designing left Bhan with little time to pursue acting. Family sources aver that Bhan acted in *Yehudi Ki Ladki*, and loved to play the role of Lord Krishna.

Once, after playing Lord Krishna, Kashi Nath Bhan returned home quite late. He felt tired and retired to sleep without changing the costumes. He had not taken off even the flower garland he was wearing around his neck. This was first noticed in the morning by his sister Satyavati. She took off the garland and hung it around the portrait of Lord Krishna hanging on the wall. When her son Bansi Lal Dalal grew up Satyavati would remind him that the garland on the portrait was a vintage one, which Bhan used to wear during his acting years.

STAGECRAFT

Kashi Nath Bhan called stage 'Sitej' (Tension). The comment was made in a lighter vein to emphasize the high degree of professionalism involved in it. Bhan had learnt the art of set designing from his teachers at the Technical Institute.

It was Kashi Nath Bhan who did the job of stage-setting for all the plays staged by Kashmir Theatrical Company and Natak Vibhag. A competent and a creative set designer, there were many legends connected with Bhan. In 1952 when Prithviraj Kapoor visited Srinagar he was greatly impressed by the creative skills displayed by Kashi Nath Bhan in setting up the stage at Shivala, Srinagar. PN Koul Sayil claims that Kapoor made an offer to Bhan to come to Bombay where he could earn more. Bhan was quick to say: "My people too need my services here."

On another occasion the noted director, V. Shanta Ram came to Srinagar to shoot *Stri*. Dr MR Achrekar had accompanied him as the Art Director. Bhan's nephew expressed the desire to witness the shooting at the Mughal garden. Dr. Achrekar prepared the sets, which somehow did not satisfy Shanta Ram. He was not able to show a particular light effect desired by his director. A young Kashmiri Pandit, who knew Bhan well, was then working with Shanta Ram. The youngman saw Bhan and requested him to prepare one panel for the shooting. Ever energetic, Bhan took off his coat and made a panel. This was readily accepted by Shanta Ram. He asked Bhan to make other panels as well. This was unacceptable to Bhan as he did not believe in belittling a fellow artist. Instead, he suggested Achrekar to change a particular angle in the panel. The latter then had no difficulty in making other panels to the satisfaction of Shanta Ram. On another occasion Bhan prepared a set, showing a houseboat on fire, at the request of a film director from Bombay.

Kashi Nath Bhan also designed sets for the well-received opera *Bombur Ta Yemberzal* directed by Mohan Lal Aima. A big boulder was to be shown. The artists were in a fix because it seemed a difficult task. Some artists despatched a team to Athwajan to fetch a big boulder from the stone quarry there. Bhan did not like the idea. It was a challenge to him. Assisted by Suraj Tiku and his uncle Shridhar, he collected batons, arranged them in an irregular pattern and finally covered it with cloth. After it was painted it looked exactly like a boulder. By the time the team returned from Athwajan (that too without a boulder) Bhan had already prepared the set.

PN Koul Sayil and Bal Krishen Qasba, who worked with Bhan, have been witness to the latter's great talent in set designing. Sayil observes:

> In *Qurbani* Bhan showed a funeral procession with just a wooden plank. Thrilled by Bhan's skills, GM Sadiq said to Bhan:"*asli koshur chhukh*" (You are a real Kashmiri). Once almond blossoms were to be shown in a play at Nedous Hotel. DP Dhar got an almond tree in a truck. It was put on the stage and supported by wooden pillars. This drew a mischievous smile from Bhan. He asked the organisers to remove the tree, saying it would spoil the show of the stage. Bhan prepared the set for an almond tree with a cardboard. After putting it on the stage he asked the fellow artists with a naughty smile: "Do you find any wooden pillar supporting it?"On another occasion the play *Habba Khatoon* was assigned to three different theatre groups. Bhan was director and set designer of one theatre group. Madhov Lal Tikoo was also with the same troupe, playing a lead character. Bhan's troupe was adjudged the best.

BK Koul Qasba is equally effusive in his praise of Bhan:

> In the Kashmir Theatrical Company Bhan was the only person who knew the art of set designing. He was an adept in stage tricks. In 1948 Bhan showed a jet plane with Gandhiji seated in it. In 1956 in the play *Hemal Nagray* Bhan created the set of 'snake in a garden' with just a simple thread. Bhan had remarkable skills in depicting symbolism in set designing. He showed a dream in *Akanandun* through clever cuttings, and untruth in *Raja Harishchandra* by showing flames going up.The play *Bilwa Mangal* was staged by Natak Vibhag twice as *Bilwa Mangal* and *Bhakt Surdas*. In this

Bhan showed rope, snake and a river through excellent coordination of curtain and light effect. Thunder and heavy downpour were shown by tapping of iron cannisters. *Vaitar Nadi* was shown with the saint Chintamani talking to Lord Krishna. Bhan would prepare the set while his assistants would make wings, paint the set and give the final touch. There were little resources. Old worn-out rugs were used.

Another set in which Bhan was at his best was when he showed an ascetic walking to a spring for meditation in *Tapasya.*

Tableaus for the river procession were also made by Bhan. In 1947 he made stage and sets for Dussehra and Ram Leela in Hazuri Bagh, Srinagar. Previously, this task used to be handled by non-Kashmiri artists from outside the state.

Kashi Nath Bhan's name commands awe and respect among the Kashmiri artists.Triloke Koul observes: "Kashi Nath Bhan was Suraj Tiku's guru in sets. He was the best in traditional set designing." ON Khazanchi, himself a talented actor, remarks: "Bhan was the best stage artist, with Suraj Tiku following him as the next best." Musician Krishen Langoo comments: "Bhan was a great set designer and a pioneer too. In *Kashmir Hamara Hai* he showed a helicopter showering flowers. There was no great technique involved in it, yet the scene looked amazing."

PAINTING

Kashi Nath Bhan was a master painter who did both landscape and portrait painting. He had equal felicity in oil, watercolour, charcoal and pencil. Bhan used only imported colours. He had good judgement of painting paper and colours, and prepared handmade paper himself. Bhan accepted only realist art as the only art. He abhorred modern abstract art. To him art was for pleasure. No art was worth if it was unintelligible to the common man.

Little details are available about Bhan's landscape paintings. He had received President's award for his 26th January tableau. This assignment was given to him by GM Sadiq, the then Education Minister. The tableau depicted Hari Parbat and *Badamwari* with Nagin Lake in the background. In one of the Republic Day tableaus Bhan showed Jawahar Tunnel in springtime. The assignment was a difficult one. It had been previously assigned to two artists but they had failed to accomplish it. Prior to Bhan tableaus for J&K Govt. used to be designed mostly by Bengali artists.

Kashi Nath Bhan was among the top portrait painters of Kashmir. Bhan's nephew Bansi Lal Dalal had twenty paintings of this master painter in 1990. At the time of exodus he could not carry these along. This collection was mostly portrait paintings. Portraits included those of Lord Krishna, different goddesses and Ganesh Dalal, Bansi's father. When Suraj Tiku saw Ganesh Dalal's portrait he could not help asking Bhan if he had put buttons actually on the painting.

Bhan loved to paint Lord Krishna because he often played the role of Lord Krishna in plays. One of the paintings he drew of Lord Krishna adorned Suraj Tiku's studio in his home. Santosh Tiku comments:"This painting was an act of great worksmanship. The painting done on 3x4 ft hardboard gave a three-dimensional look. It looked as if the peacock's feathers drawn could be easily lifted." Bhan had done another painting—a life-size painting of Lord Krishna.

Kashi Nath Bhan also did a life-size portrait of goddess Sharika. This painting, put on rollers, was installed at *Chakrishwar* during a big *Chandi Yagya* there. Bhan's painting of the Tulamulla spring had been well received. Another major feat of Kashi Nath Bhan was a life-size painting depicting Tagore with *Gitanjali* in his hand. The painting had been specially prepared to be installed at Tagore Hall, Srinagar.

Bhan painted Lal Ded, harnessing the theme of one of the legends, according to which the saint poetess is said to have jumped into a baker's oven. The painting had been prepared on the occasion of Lal Ded Day. Incidentally, it was for the first time that Lal Ded Day was observed. Kashmiri Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Kralkhud had organised the 3-day function. The function was attended by Master Zind Koul while Master Shankar Koul presided over the proceedings. PN Koul Sayil had approached Bhan for making the painting. The latter was initially reluctant. He told Sayil: "There are different versions on Lal Ded. I am unable to decide which one to paint." After a little thought Bhan asked Sayil to recite Lal Ded's particular *vaakh* about the baker's oven. In the painting Bhan drew an oven on a big panel. He showed flames coming out of the oven, followed by a lotus. Bhan chose Sayil's couplet as the title of the painting. It read as:

"Soburasdad heyih heyih	You showed patience,
Cheh Naras Nur Sabduya	The flames enlightened you,
Tanduras Swarug Sabduya	The oven turned into heaven.
Chah Dikhna Ora Alav"	We are awaiting the call from you.

Bhan had drawn a different portrait of Lal Ded, based on the legend of 'pot belly', for Sudhar Samiti.

Besides Lal Ded, Bhan made portraits of the Kashmiri poet Mehjoor and GM Sadiq. He had also made pencilsketches of many saints, which were printed in Master Zind Koul's book. During his posting at Anantnag Bhan was a frequent visitor to Gautamnag *ashram*, where Swami Gash Kak was the mahant.Ascetics from other places would often come here to interact with Swami Gash Kak.

Kashi Nath Bhan displayed a lot of energy in painting. He was particularly agile in drawing portraits. PN Koul Sayil, Bhan's student at Industrial Training Institute, ITI Srinagar, narrates two incidents in this context. On one occasion Bhan drew portraits of all the twenty-six students in the class, devoting three minutes to one portrait. On another occasion a high-level dignitary from outside the state was to attend a function at ITI, Srinagar. Bhan was teaching his students in the classroom. No sooner did the dignitary enter the compound than Bhan glanced through the window to have a look at him and began drawing his portrait. As the dignitary entered Bhan's classroom, he was surprised on seeing his portrait and asked Bhan how he had done so. Bhan was quick to reply, "Not only with these eyes but also with this chalk." The year was either 1952 or 1953.

During his Anantnag years Bhan would spend winter vacations at his home in Srinagar. One day in the early hours the owner of a houseboat came to his house. Bhan asked his nephew to tell the person that he was not at home. When Bhan learnt the visitor had been sent by his Bengali instructor JC Mukerji he called the visitor back. The boatman handed over to him the recommendation letter sent by the instructor through a Prince of a foreign country. The latter was staying in this man's houseboat and desired to have some paintings done. The Prince had come from Calcutta. He had twelve photographs of nude women. In reverence to his teacher Bhan accepted nominal remuneration for the work. The Prince wanted to give him more money but Bhan refused. The Bengali instructor had told the Prince that Bhan alone had the talent to do that particular set of paintings.

Bhan's studio in the old house was on the ground floor. While doing this work he would keep the windows closed and lock the door from inside. The paintings were done over a period of one and a half months.

That winter most of Bhan's vacation was spent in painting. His sister Satyavati one day told him: "Even when you come here during vacations you remain busy." Bhan said, "I have some assignment sent to me by the Bengali (JC Mukerji) and could not refuse it." Locking the door from inside had aroused Bansi Lal Dalal's curiosity. One day, when Bhan was away, he unhinged the door of the studio and saw big paintings drawn by his uncle on canvases. While coming out of the studio he could not put the door in proper position. When Bhan returned he asked his sister: "Had anybody gone in during my absence?" Satyavati replied, "Who could dare enter your studio?"

Such were Bhan's skills in painting that at times his admirers even attributed some of the paintings drawn by other master artists like Som Nath Khosa and Maheshwar Nath Dhar to him. According to Gokul Dembi a painting at Bhairav Mandir in Maisuma depicting *Panchmukhi Siva* was drawn by Kashi Nath Bhan. Bansi Lal Dalal claims that Sheikh Abdullah's bust near the old secretariat was made by his uncle.

AN INSTITUTION

Kashi Nath Bhan was an institution in himself and a down-to-earth person. He disliked sycophancy and hated hypocrisy. He helped students who had passion for art. Bhan had a keen eye to spot talent. He never worked for commercial purposes. Not only GM Sadiq but also other education ministers respected him, both for his immense talent as well as for his uprightness. Bhan never sought personal favours from the ministers or other officers with whom he was on good terms.

Bhan loved to socialise with people who had creativity in them. His close friends were Master Shridhar Joo Tikoo, Shambhoo Nath Koul, Ved Lal Dhar Vakil, Madhav Dass, Prem Nath Jattu, Sham Lal Kutwal (Santoor player), Madhav Punjabi, Dina Nath Nadim, Dina Nath Walli, Sat Lal Kampassi, Gopi Nath Walli, Jagar Nath Koul (son of Master Zind Koul) and Dr. Gopi Krishan. Kashi Nath would frequently go to Master Zind Koul to discuss various issues with him. Three other personalities with whom Bhan shared intimate relationship were Krishan Dass Sharma, Prof. Mehmood and Master Hari Vilas. Krishan Dass Sharma, father of radio artiste, Kedar Nath Sharma (Kari) was a good actor and was associated with Pratap Sabha.

Though Bhan did not carry the burden of any social or political ideology yet he had a strong commitment to social uplift. He used theatre as a vehicle to convey social message. Bhan's friendship with veteran artistes Madhav Dass and Ved Lal Dhar Vakil was not limited to theatre only but was based on the common vision of a humane and better society.

Kashi Nath Bhan did great social work for the uplift of the widows. He helped widows through personal contributions and taught them *gabba* and *numdah* making. A widow welfare centre was run from Shivala,where widows from both the communities received help. This centre continued for two years. After retirement Bhan worked for the widows at Shivala and Badiyar (Lal Ded School). He never flaunted his philanthropy. Most of his personal help to widows was carried on silently. Many of the widows who were Bhan's students later became teachers. He helped the children of widows by teaching them art and assisted them in seeking jobs. Lal Ded School had a Social Welfare Section where Bhan taught embroidery to widows. Bhan also helped poor people in marrying off their daughters. He would raise finances for performing marriages and at times helped in finding matches as well.

TEACHER

Bhan was a great teacher who was very friendly with his students. Amar Nath Vaishnavi, a student of Bhan at Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute, values Kashi Nath Bhan as a great teacher. He says:

> Bhan was an all-rounder. He was good both in landscape and portrait painting. He did not do much landscape painting because there were no aesthetes to buy such paintings. Bhan did good letter-writing and also taught us clay modelling. He would teach us how to make a swan with wire and fountain with rubber pipe. He made us learn cardboard cutting. I would accompany Kashi Nath Bhan for stage work. We would return home often very late when the police and dogs would give us tense moments. The former would let us off when we would show the painting brush or hands smeared with colour. I learnt stage setting from Bhan. His stage looked real.

Bhan's students at ITI, Srinagar, included Jawahar Lal Wanchoo, Om Prakash Dhar, Nissar Aziz Beg and Mohammed Sidiq (of

Kalashpora). Wanchoo would often narrate Bhan's legendary skills in set designing to junior artistes who did not know Bhan. Bihari Kak, an artiste says, "I did not know Bhan. We learnt about him from Wanchoo who would tell us how people would feel amazed when Bhan would show a snake coming out of fire in a set."

Jawahar Wanchoo and Mohammad Sidiq would assist Bhan in set designing. They were students at ITI but were curious to know where Bhan went in the evenings. This is how they got involved in assisting Bhan in sets by making wings and painting the items.

PN Koul Sayil reminisces:

> Kashi Nath Bhan cared for students and was a great teacher. We were twenty-six students in the class. He would ask us to make designs for carpets and ensure that every student prepared it. While teaching drawing he would take us to the backwater of Mangleshwar and ask us to draw Hari Parbat and the shrine of Makhdoom Sahib. I was in painting and decoration section. We would draw paintings and submit these to him for correction. At other times he would take us to Zero Bridge area and ask students to draw a painting with the Shankaracharya hill in the background. Bhan was wise as well. *Hemal Nagray* play was to be staged. For the crown Gadadar idol, weighing about two kgs., was got. For its safe custody during night Bhan entrusted the job to a sweeper. When others objected Bhan smiled, lit a cigarette and said: "You are children. This man will take extra care for its safety. The poor man will not get sleep."

DISCIPLINARIAN

Kashi Nath Bhan was a strict disciplinarian and a hard taskmaster. BK Koul Qasba observes:

> Bhan commanded great respect and would brook no indiscipline. Even seniors used to be scared of him. I was introduced to him by my father Jagar Nath Koul. I played the role of Rohit in *Harishchandra*. Bhan Sahib would advise us to obey the commands of parents but I would only obey his orders. He was stern and would say 'even if there is death in a family stage is to be attended to.' Herday Nath Gurtoo set up an example by attending the stage even when his daughter had died. Bhan did not allow

> Ved Lal Dhar Vakil to leave the stage when the latter was down with an acute attack of diarrhoea. Bhan's writ loosened when Sudhar Samiti was getting defunct and indiscipline had entered the ranks of Natak Vibhag. It was the time when nobody was responding to Bhan. He had tough time in carrying on the work. It was Kashi Nath Bhan who taught me the use of curtains, make-up, etc. Those were the days when crude items like zinc oxide, red oxide and oils were used for make-up. Reluctantly I had to bid goodbye to theatre to pursue my education more rigorously.

Santosh Tiku, who as a child had an opportunity to see this great artist, remarks:

> Kashi Nath Bhan was a frequent visitor to our home. He had remained a colleague of my father's uncle, Shridhar Joo, at Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute. The two were bosom friends and the friendship had extended to the two families. It was Bhan who introduced and groomed up Madhov Lal Tikoo and my father in theatre. He was tall and would generally sit in a chair in our home. He displayed great dignity. Not only my father but Madhov Lal Tikoo also would bow before Kashi Nath Bhan. This created great impact on me.

Amar Nath Vaishnavi reveals the other facet of his personality. He remarks:

> Kashi Nath Bhan was very friendly at the Institute. He had great sense of humour and would often cut jokes. He was warm towards his students and would not behave like a teacher. He was fatherly and would often put his hand around while teaching drawing. But in theatre he was thoroughly professional and quite strict. He didn't tolerate any nonsense. Bhan had strong demeanour, good personality and excellent voice. He shared a quality with another brilliant instructor at the Technical Institute, Jagar Nath Mattoo. Both hated sycophancy because they had good confidence in their work. Bhan did not waste time in socialising. He utilised his time only for his job, home and theatre. He stood for social change. Through the play *Vidhwa*, which was well-received, he wanted to change the social psyche of the people.

Vaishnavi refers to an incident to justify that Bhan had great sense of repartee. He says:

> Mohi-ud-Din, who later became Secretary of Finance, J&K Govt., was our drawing teacher at Govt. School, Babapora in 1938. He was a brilliant drawing teacher and made very good portraits and sketches. He too had been trained at the Technical Institute. Mohi-ud-Din would often thrash students while teaching. In later years when Mohi-ud-Din was secretary he came to watch a play staged by Kashi Nath Bhan. All secretaries had been invited. When Bhan asked Mohi-ud-Din for his comments on the play the latter observed: "The play was good but the language looked like Koshur Urdu." Bhan was quick to reply: "Listen, if they can tolerate your elevation to the post of Secretary of Finance from a simple drawing teacher why can't they tolerate this Koshur Urdu."

PN Koul Sayil also refers to Bhan's humour. While drawing a portrait of Mehjoor Bhan would say to him: 'Mehjoor is Sheikh Abdullah plus turban.'

Kashi Nath Bhan lead a simple life. He did not have sartorial tastes. He ironed his clothes occassionally and often wore Churidaar trousers. He was a chain smoker but never touched alcohol. He disliked anyone drinking in his presence. Kashi Nath Bhan was a traditionalist to the core. One of his sons decided to wear a western suit on the day of his marriage. Bhan strongly objected to it and said :"You do what you like. I take leave of you. There are other occasions when you can wear the suit." The son then dressed up as bridegroom in Achkan and Pyjama.

FAMILY

Kashi Nath Bhan was married to Kamlawati. He is survived by two daughters, Mohini and Chuni and two sons, Moti Lal and Jawahar Lal. The latter went to Baroda University for a degree in Fine Arts but later changed his mind to pursue a course in Museology. He had a distinguished career, first as a curator in S. P. S. Museum and later at Central Asian Studies Museum, Kashmir University. Jawahar would paint also. Moti Lal did his Masters in Mathematics and served as a college professor.

Part Two

SURAJ NARAIN TIKU—HIS EVOLUTION AS AN ARTIST

Suraj Narain Tiku was a master painter, a creative set designer and a talented actor. His outstanding talent and great personal qualities made him a legend in his lifetime. Suraj lived in times when commercialism in art and theatre was still a taboo. He abhorred cheap publicity. To him art was more important than its creator. Tiku did not have godfathers either. Had the opportunity come his way he would have emerged as an artist of national fame in all the genres he pursued.

Suraj Tiku was born on 14th June, 1929 to Govind Ram and Yamberzali. He had humble origins and an unfortunate childhood. He was still a toddler when his father died. The prevailing joint family ethos and the affectionate care of his uncles helped Suraj to grow up to adolescence without being burdened by feelings of insecurity. However, the economic hardship the family faced did not allow Suraj to pursue higher education.

Tikus originally lived in Drabiyar locality of Habba Kadal in Srinagar. Later, they shifted to Sheelteng, Babapora on the other side of Habba Kadal bridge.

Suraj's grandfather Kailash Ram Tiku had three sons—Govind Ram, Shridhar Joo and Madhov Lal. Family sources say that Kailash Ram's another son had passed away quite early. Of the three surviving brothers Govind Ram was the eldest. Kailash Ram's daughter Boniamal was married to Nanak Chand Gurtoo. Govind Ram's only daughter Arundati was married to Radha Krishan Raina of Dalhasanyar locality near Drabiyar.

Govind Ram had his own business. He ran a paddyshelling mill. The other two brothers were employed in the State government. Shridhar Joo

was an instructor in crafts in State Industrial Training Department. A man of great taste Shridhar Joo was quite affectionate to the children of the family. He loved to take them on entertainment tours to Mughal gardens, the museum or other places when some dignitary visited Srinagar.

EDUCATION

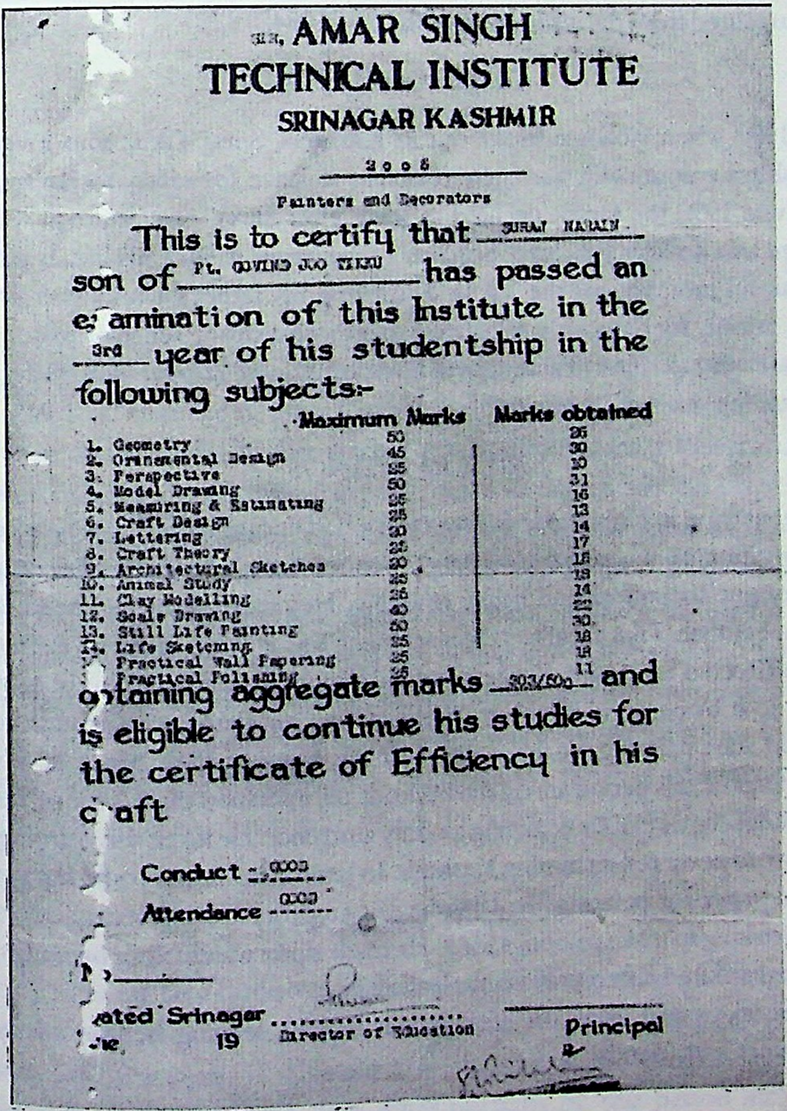
Suraj had his primary schooling from the local Babapora Govt. School, the *alma mater* of many eminent personalities. He later joined M. P. High School, Dilawar Khan and passed Matriculation in 1945. Subsequently, Tiku enrolled at the local Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute to obtain Diploma in Fine Arts.

HOSHIARPUR YEARS

After the successful completion of the diploma unemployment haunted Suraj. He left for Hoshiarpur to try his luck as a drawing teacher. There he cultivated friendship with another Kashmiri Shyam Nath Pandita of Khoja Bagh, Baramulla. Pandita, a successful teacher in his later years, was serving in Kamahi Devi High School at Hoshiarpur. At the request of the principal of this school Ram Lal Suraj made a life-size portrait of him. This portrait adorns the school even today. Suraj also worked for a short time at Simbaoli School in Meerut as a drawing teacher. Later, he returned to Kashmir and was appointed as a government teacher. Soon after returning to Srinagar Suraj's marriage was solemnised with Uma Kaw, daughter of Maheshwar Nath Kaw of Zaindar Mohalla in 1953. They have two sons, Santosh and Ravi, and both are associated with theatre. The former has also excelled in set designing, painting, calligraphy and poetry. Their daughter Sushma has done diploma in painting. The other daughter Renu has done Masters in Hindi and teaches in a Navodaya Vidalaya School. She had passion for painting in her school years.

SONG AND DRAMA DIVISION

Suraj Tiku's first posting as a teacher was in the Govt. High School, Pattan, where Saif-ud-Din was the headmaster. The school had been upgraded recently from Middle to High School. Suraj was appointed as a drawing teacher, and continued to pursue painting and theatre work with full passion. Suraj used to stay in the adjacent village, Palhalan. His aunt Mrs. Madhov Lal Tikoo hailed from this village.



S.H. AMAR SINGH
TECHNICAL INSTITUTE
SRINAGAR KASHMIR

2008

Painters and Decorators

This is to certify that SURAJ NARAIN son of Pt. GOVIND JOO TIKU has passed an examination of this Institute in the 3rd year of his studentship in the following subjects:-

	Maximum Marks	Marks obtained
1. Geometry	50	25
2. Ornamental Design	45	30
3. Perspective	25	10
4. Model Drawing	50	31
5. Measuring & Estimating	25	16
6. Craft Design	25	13
7. Lettering	30	14
8. Craft Theory	25	17
9. Architectural Sketches	30	15
10. Animal Study	25	18
11. Clay Modelling	25	14
12. Scale Drawing	40	22
13. Still Life Painting	50	30
14. Life Sketching	25	18
15. Practical Wall Papering	25	18
16. Practical Polishing	25	11

obtaining aggregate marks 303/600 and is eligible to continue his studies for the certificate of Efficiency in his craft

Conduct GOOD

Attendance GOOD

No.

Dated Srinagar

the 19

Director of Education

Principal

In 1966 Suraj Tiku joined Song and Drama Division, initially as a trainee and later as a regular employee.The artistes of Song and Drama Division had to do a lot of travelling with the roving theatre. Fed up with hectic travelling Suraj Tiku got an opportunity to join School of Designs. He came close to Triloke Koul who was the Director of the Institute. Suraj Tiku retired from the institute on 30th June, 1984.

DISPLACEMENT

In 1990 when violence broke out in Kashmir, Suraj Tiku, who loved Kashmir emotionally, was quite reluctant to leave for safety to Jammu. In June 1990 the family decided to leave after Suraj's son Santosh was asked by a colleague to leave Srinagar immediately to save his life. It was a painful moment for the Tikus. Retrieving his father's works was the first priority for Santosh, a sensitive person with a strong sense of history. Suraj cautioned him: "Paintings are no priority. I will redraw these. Safety should be our main concern."

EXILE PAINTINGS

After staying in Udhampur for two and a half months the Tikus moved to Jyotipuram, where Santosh runs a school. Suraj's lungs had become weary due to asthma and heavy smoking. He could never reconcile to exile. Santosh Tiku recalls: "Displacement was a great shock to father. This affected his health. Kashmir would haunt him all the time. He gave vent to it by painting Kashmir. Whenever he remembered Kashmir he would start painting, at times not even on proper paper. Some of his paintings of this period are on the backside of invitation cards. One of his paintings shows clouds depicting gloomy ambience. He loved this painting. He could never resist painting Kashmir. In Jammu my father could not get good paper for painting."In 1995 he got an order from a central govt. undertaking to make paintings for it. He made thirty watercolour paintings, which explored different Kashmir landscapes.

Suraj passed away on 26th January, 1997, leaving behind many admirers and friends.

A MASTER ARTIST

Suraj Tiku was drawn to art instinctively. As a young boy he would pick up charcoal to draw sparrows on the walls. When he was in the 5th or 6th standard his art teacher asked him to draw a flower. After Suraj finished the drawing and presented it to the teacher the latter was annoyed and scolded him. The teacher got the impression that somebody else had done the job for Suraj. He asked him to draw it again in his presence. The teacher was amazed to see such free flow of lines.

Suraj's instincts were spotted and honed into serious pursuit for art by Kashi Nath Bhan. The latter became Suraj's guru not only in painting but also in set designing and acting. Bhan was a regular visitor to Tikus' house and had the opportunity to watch Suraj's talent at close quarters. Suraj was a master artist who could do portraits and landscapes with equal ease.

PORTRAITURE

Even as Suraj Tiku came out of the portals of Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute he was an accomplished portrait painter. His portrait of Ram Lal, Principal of Kamahi Devi School at Hoshiarpur, speaks volumes about his talent. Two other portraits of this period include those of Lord Krishna (1948) and Lord Rama (1953).

Suraj Tiku's another teacher at Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute was Jagar Nath Mattoo, an excellent portrait artist of his time. Tiku

would spend a lot of time with him, learning techniques in portrait-drawing. Suraj had perfection in portrait making. He would do portrait paintings in oil. Moti Lal Kemmu describes him as 'the last portrait painter I know.'

Suraj Tiku made a life-size portrait of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the then Chief Minister. This oil on canvas painting is preserved in Sher-i-Kashmir Conference Hall of Soura Medical Institute.

Another master portrait drawn by Suraj is that of Bhagwan Gopi Nath, an ascetic of high spiritual merit. MK Tiku, who gave the order on behalf of Bhagwan Gopi Nath Trust, recalls, "When I showed this 4ft. x 3ft. painting to Shankar Joo Fotedhar he was simply amazed. The saint was shown in sitting posture, performing Havan. Every item used in the Havan—*Thali* (plate), *Pambash* (Lotus seed), *Shakar* (Jaggery), *Narjeel* (coconut pieces) and *Kangri* (local warming stove)— was well delineated." This painting was stolen in mid-1990s when some unidentified people gatecrashed into the temple premises at Kharyar.

Other excellent portraits made by Tiku which are still available to us include those of Saint Anand Ji (1986) of Vilgam, Saint Govind Koul Jalali of Ram Shaiv Ashram, Fateh Kadal, Amar Nath Kak (1982), the first optician of Kashmir and Tika Lal Langoo, a philanthropist and father of Krishen Langoo, the music maestro. He also made portraits of Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. SN Ahmed Shah, the renowned physician, and Chaman Lal Churangoo. Bal Krishen Qasba's only regret is that Tiku never made any portrait of his illustrious grandfather, Master Zind Koul. He says, "Suraj made an excellent portrait of Krishen Langoo's father, delineating his facial wrinkles beautifully."

Two artists Ghulam Rasool Santosh and Suraj Tiku had been simultaneously asked to make large portraits of Jawaharlal Nehru. Suraj was also quick in portrait drawing. Even while conversing with a person he could finish his sketch in just ten minutes. The following day he would present the finished portrait to him.

Gokul Dembi, the famed artist and Tiku's former colleague comments:

> I found him to be the best portrait painter of his era. His use of colours was beautiful. In his portraits the colour of the skin



Tej Tiku



Santosh Tiku



Ravi Tiku



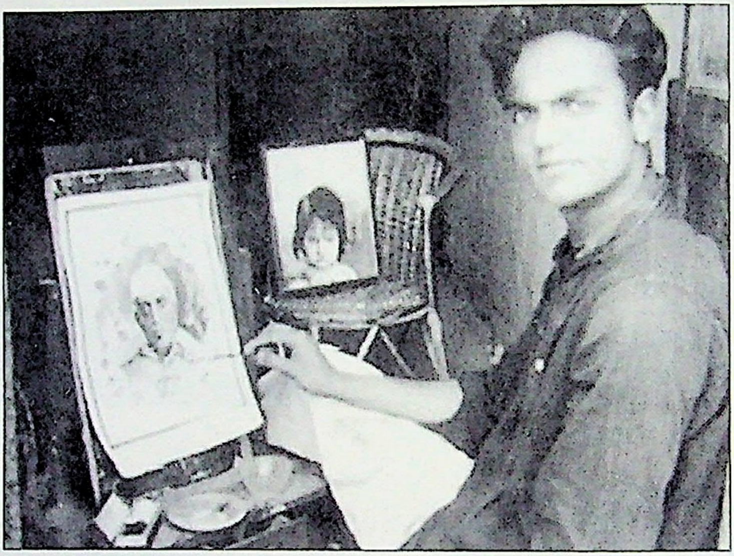
Shweta Tiku



ML Tiku



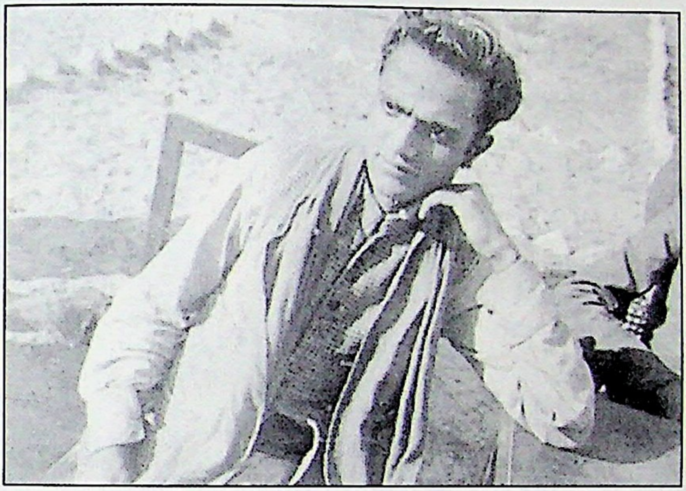
Rakesh Tiku



Suraj Tiku in his studio making a portrait of Jawaharlal Nehru, 1949.



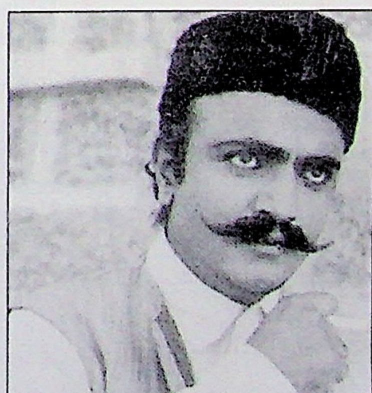
As Drawing teacher in
Hanjiveera, Pattan, 1952.



Aged nineteen.

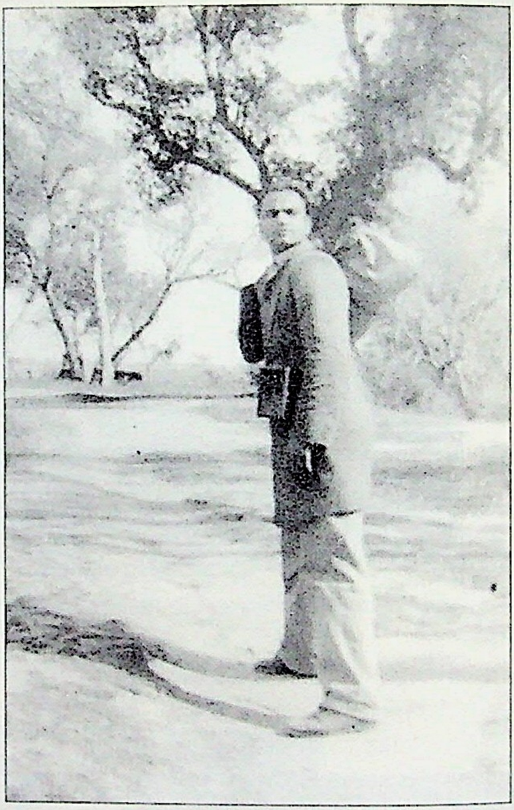


Aged twenty seven.



In Maenziraat.

Suraj at Simbaoli
(Distt. Meerut), May 1950.





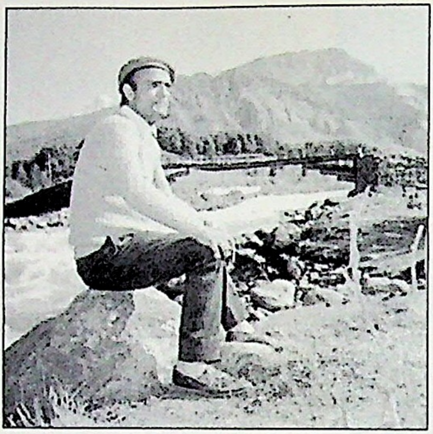
At Simbaoli with a colleague and students, 1950.



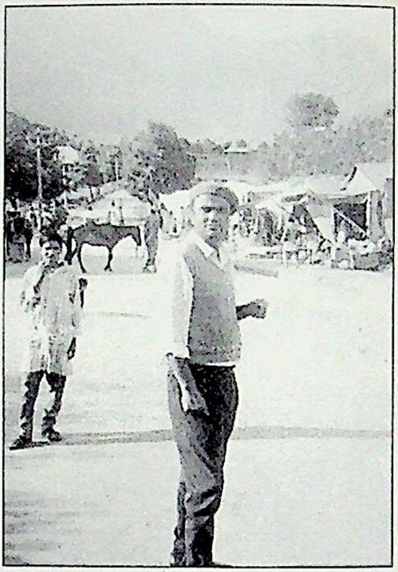
On the day of wedding,
Sept. 1953



Suraj with his wife Uma, 1953



Suraj Tiku on the bank of Lidder in Pahalgam



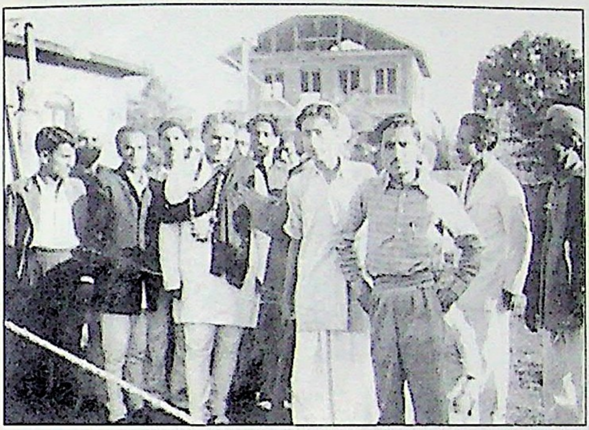
At Pahalgam in the bazaar



Suraj Tiku at Taj Mahal (standing 3rd from left)



At Gulmarg enjoying horse-ride



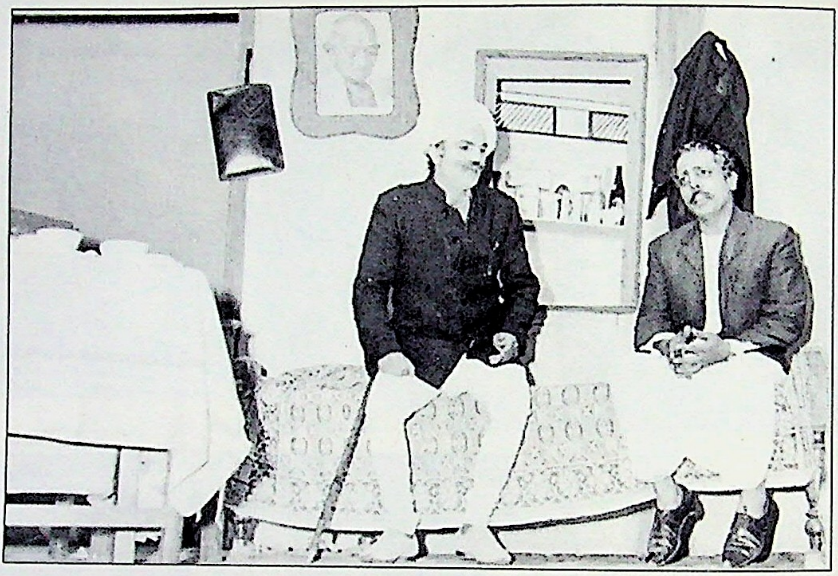
Suraj Tiku (2nd from right) with Prithviraj Kapoor (3rd from left), 1952



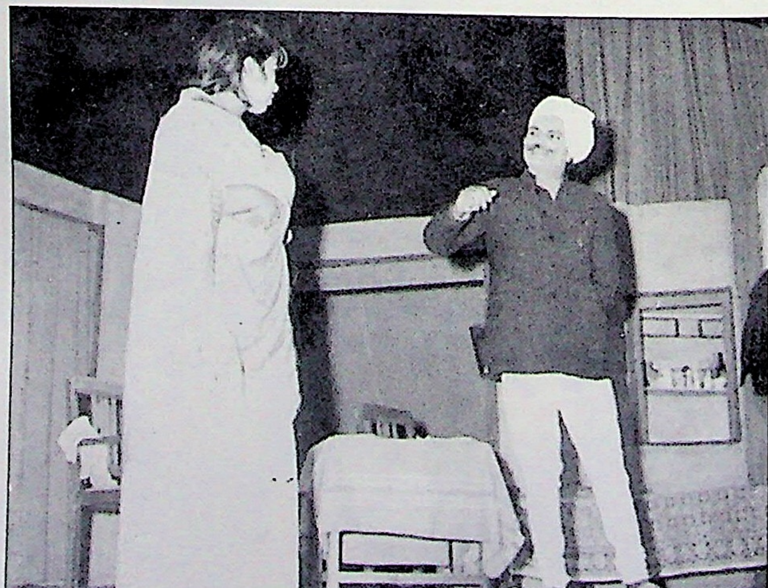
Suraj Tiku (extreme left) with Herday Nath Gurtoo (2nd from right)



Suraj Tiku (3rd from left) with artistes of H.M.T. at Bangalore, 1979



In *Uljan* with Rattan Lal Bhan (right)



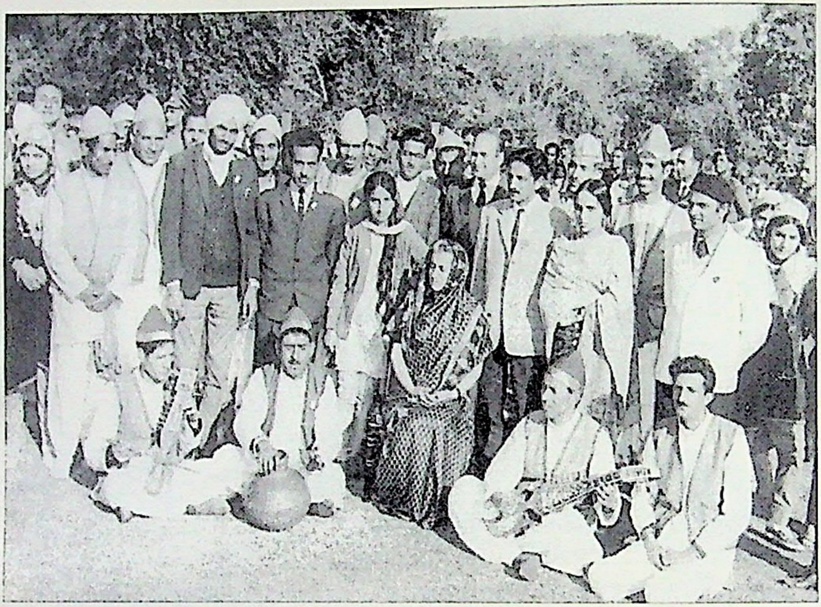
In *Uljan* with Brij Kishori (left)



A scene from Kashmiri film *Maenziraat*. Seen in this photograph are (from L-R): Suraj Tiku, Pushkar Bhan, Som Nath Sadhu.



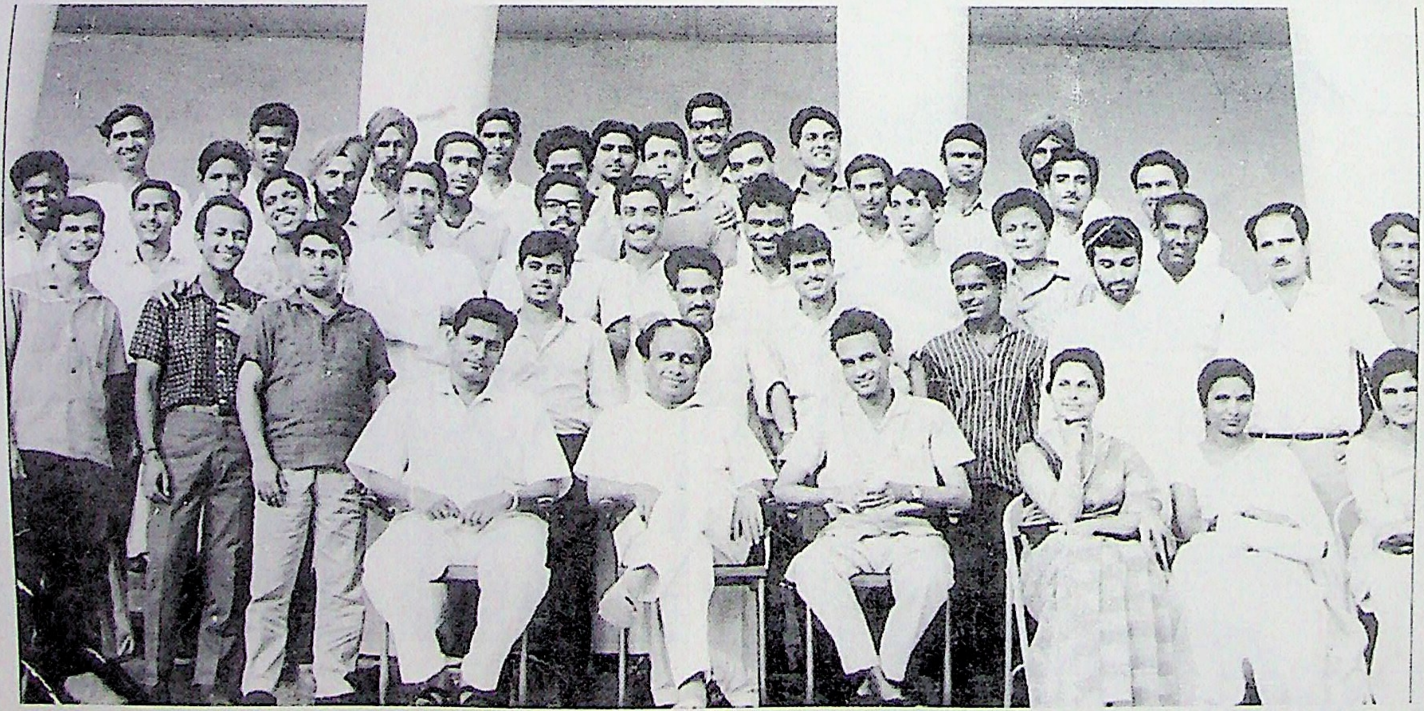
Suraj Tiku (centre) after giving a performance in a Kashmiri village



Republic Day (Shalimar Bagh Tableau) cultural troupe from J&K with the then Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi. Seen in the photograph are- (standing first row): Mohammad Subhan Bhagat (3rd from left), Suraj Tiku (extreme right): and Triloke Koul (3rd from right). Also seen in the photograph is Ghulam Ahmed Sofi (sitting second from left).



Republic Day cultural troupe with the then President, Mr. V.V. Giri.



A group photograph of Song and Drama Division trainees with Col. Gupte (sitting 2nd from left) at New Delhi (1968). Seen in this photograph are Krishen Langoo (standing 1st row, 2rd from left), Omkar Nath Khazanchi (standing 3rd row, 5th from left), Suraj Tiku (last row, 2nd from right) and Makhan Lal Bhat (2nd row, 3rd from right).

Suraj Tiku's Teachers at Sir Amar Singh Technical School



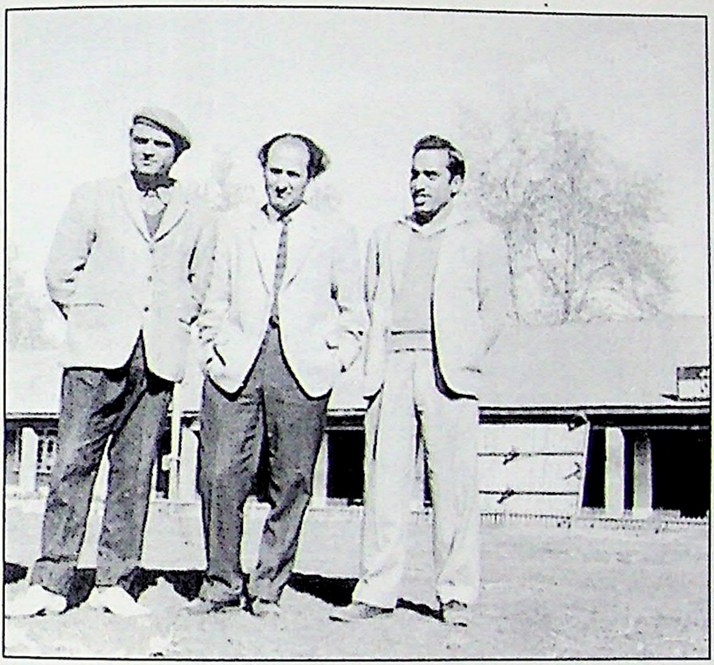
Sat Lal Kampassi.



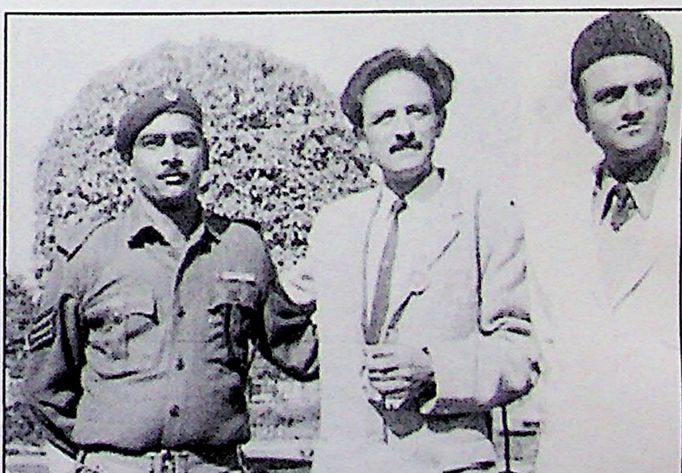
Shiv Nath Raina.



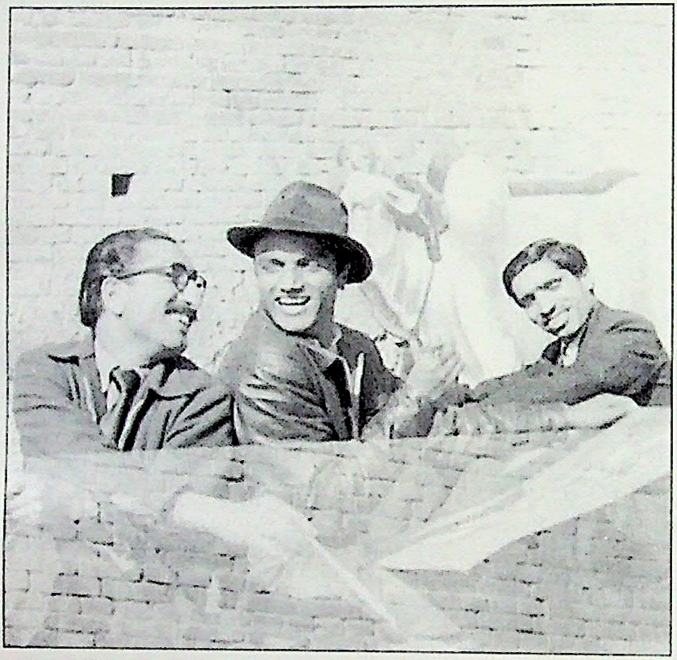
Kashi Nath Bhan



Suraj Tiku (extreme left) with fellow artists PN Kachru (centre) and Ghulam Ahmed at the School of Designs



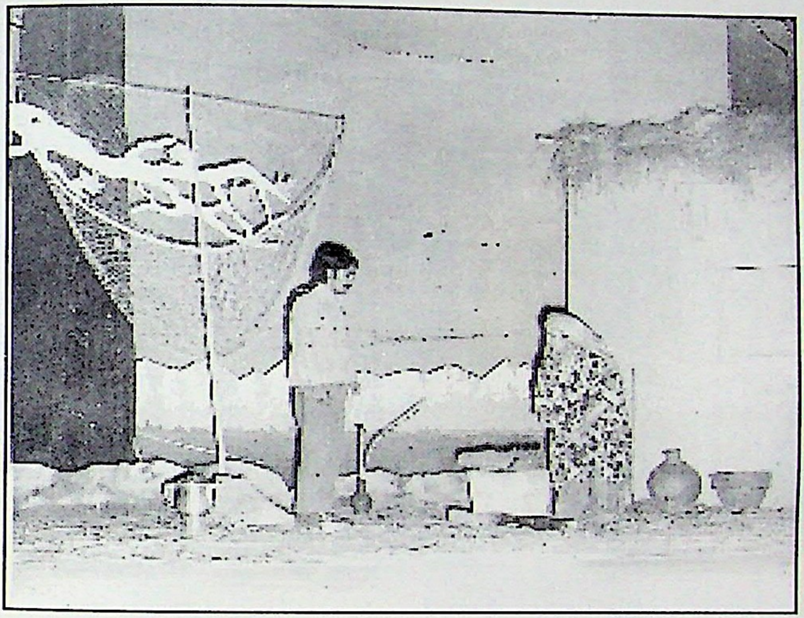
Suraj with Triloke Koul (centre)



Suraj Tiku (centre) sharing a joke with artist Mohan Raina (left) during exhibition work



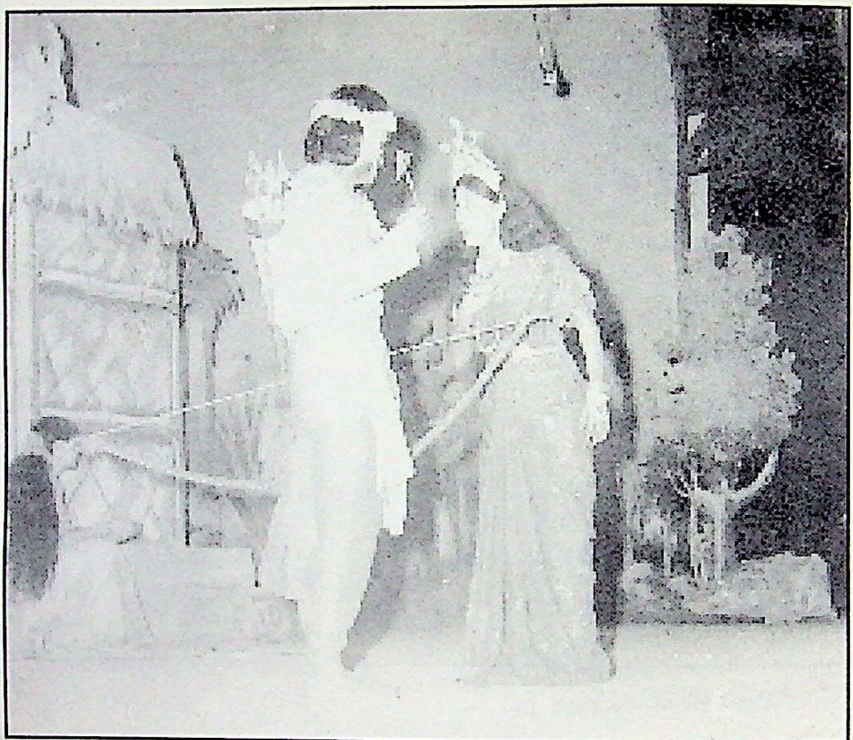
Mohan Raina and Suraj Tiku at work for exhibition



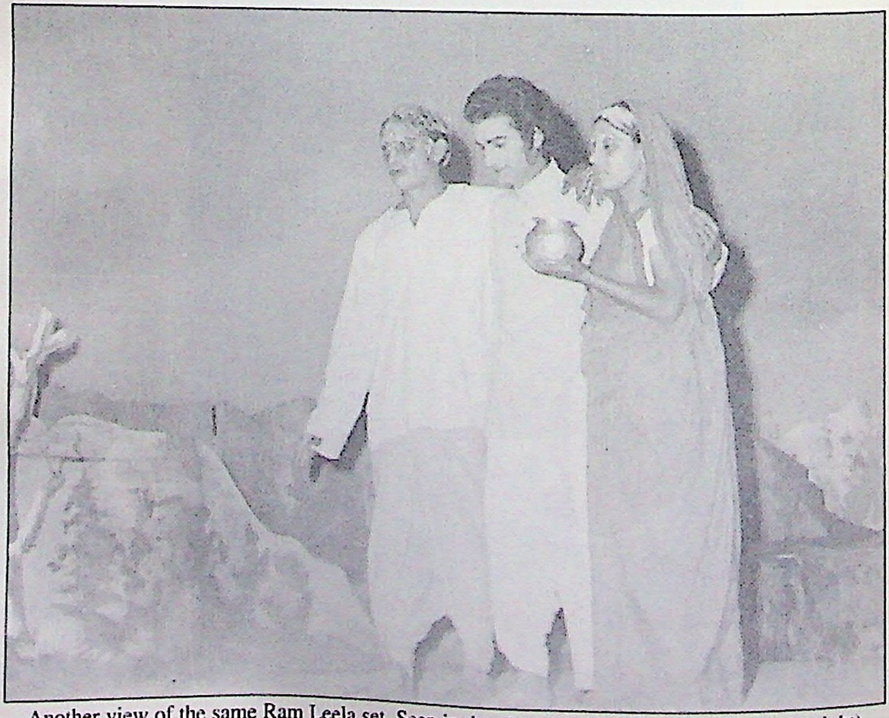
Set of *Alav* designed by Suraj Tiku. Seen in the photograph are: Rajesh Kaw (L) and Shaheen Naqasbandhi (R).



Set of *Alav*. Seen in the photograph are :
Satish Razdan (L) and Shaheen Naqasbandhi (R).



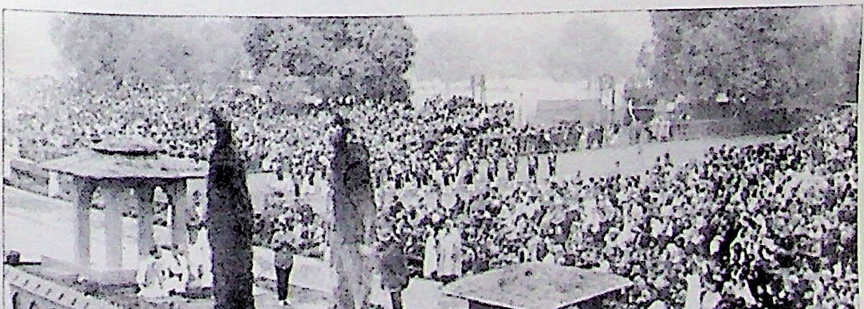
A Ram Leela (1976) set designed by Suraj Tiku. Seen in the photograph is Asha Zaroo (R)



Another view of the same Ram Leela set. Seen in the photograph is Asha Zaroo (extreme right)



Set of *Endgame* designed by Suraj Tiku. Seen in the photograph are Kanhaya Dhar(L) and Tej Tikoo (R).



Republic Day Tableau, Shalimar Bagh

Pencilsketches by Suraj Tiku



Bhagwan Gopi Nath (1991)



Krishen Langoo



A Kashmiri village

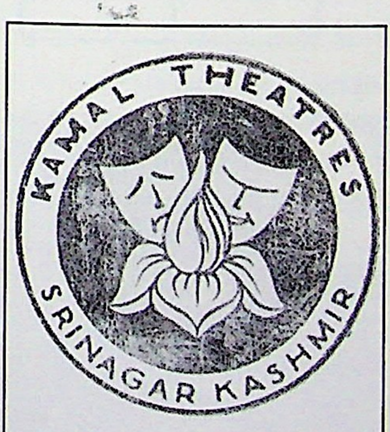
Logos of Theatre Clubs Designed by Suraj Tiku



Kala Kendra



Vasant Theatre







Logos Designed by Suraj Tiku

JK P C S

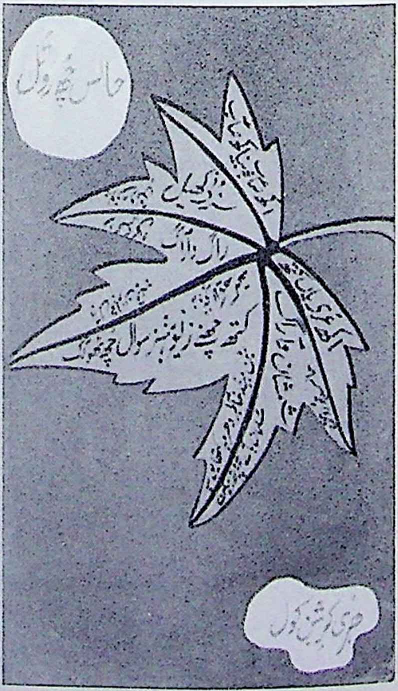
Little Lads

Learning is Unveiling

Title covers of the books designed by Suraj Tiku



Title : Shehjar
Author : Abdul Ahad Dildar Sukhnai



Title : Halas Chu Rotul
Author : Hari Krishen Kaul

would look natural and portraits were full of life.

MK Tiku,who knew most of the master artists of Kashmir intimately, says Tiku was as good as MN Dhar, the master portrait artist of the early 20th century. He observes:

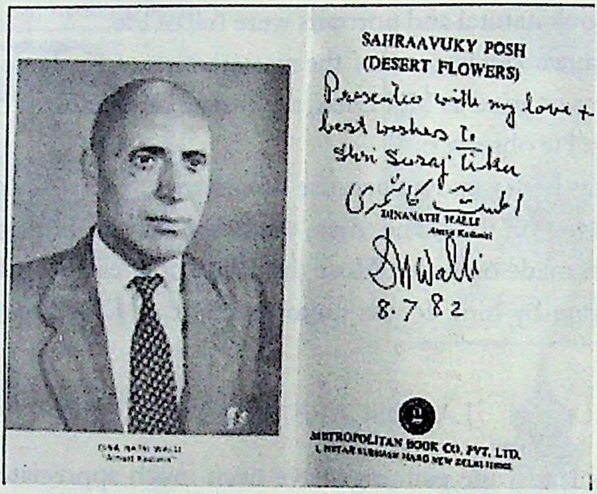
> Dhar was better known because he was there before Suraj Tiku had arrived on the scene. Also, the urban elite of Srinagar had portraits made on order. More than 75% of these portraits had been done by him. It was quite natural that Dhar was better known.

LANDSCAPE PAINTING

Suraj Tiku's landscape paintings have been much appreciated. He was proficient in oil as well as in watercolour. His landscape paintings are mostly in watercolour.

Suraj loved to paint Kashmir landscapes and its rural scenes. Boat formed a regular theme in his landscape painting. To him boat symbolised Kashmir. In landscape paintings he would paint Dal and Anchar lakes and other water bodies in the vicinity of Srinagar and in rural hinterland. Dal Lake has remained a regular theme for local as well as foreign painters. Some of his landscape paintings include *A Street Scene in Winter*, *River by Night* (displayed at 32nd Annual All India Exhibition in 1968) and *In Kashmir* (displayed at Art Exhibition in Jammu in 1964).

Another much appreciated landscape painting of Tiku is *A River Scene near Purushyar Temple*. This was the painting he gifted to his friend MK Tiku, a trustee of Bhagwan Gopi Nath Trust. One evening Suraj was gossiping with Tiku at the Habba Kadal bridge. He took out the cover of a cigarette packet and drew a pencilsketch depicting the area near Purushyar temple with Jehlum flowing in its full majesty and big boats *(behats)* moored to its bank. Tiku asked Suraj to try a better landscape scene near Chinar Bagh or Nehru Park. After five or six days Suraj dropped in at Tiku's shop at Habba Kadal and handed over to him the painting depicting river scene near Purushyar Temple. On seeing this painting in MK Tiku's house Dina Nath Walli *Almast* was all praise for Suraj. The latter also respected Walli and admired his landscape work. Tiku would preserve Walli's paintings. Walli's poetic collection

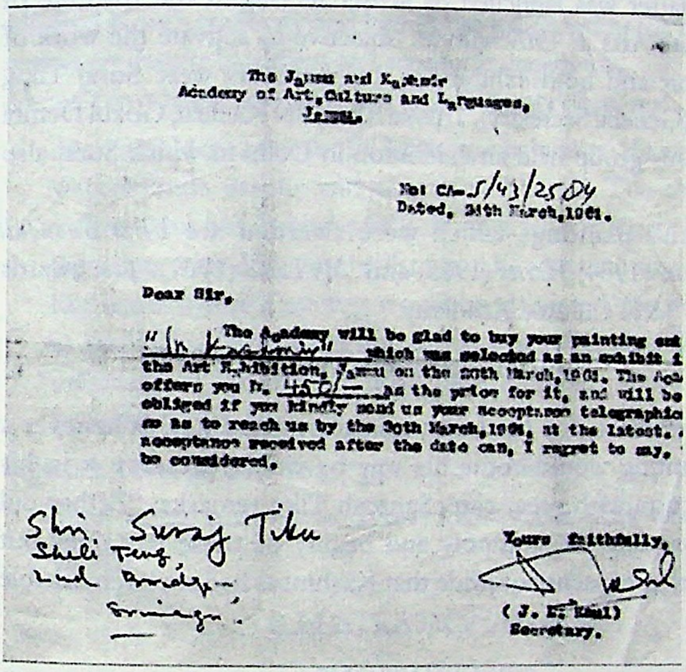


Sahraavuky Posh (Desert Flowers), presented to Suraj by the author was carried by him to Jammu also. On another occasion the artist GR Santosh took the Purushyar painting in his hands, kissed it and exclaimed, *"Yi Chuh Kamal, Yi Gav Artist. Atha Asiah Logmut Rupaya Ya Zah, Vuchiv Kamal"* (This is great. This shows the artist in him. It must have cost him a rupee or two. How wonderful it is!). An artist from Maharashtra, who was connected with Khadi Commission visited MK Tiku and saw the painting. He was all praise for the painting and asked MK Tiku if the artist of the painting was alive and expressed the desire to meet Suraj Tiku. The meeting could not materialise as the Maharashtrian artist had to leave the next day.

OIL ON CANVAS

Suraj Tiku did landscape paintings in oil as well. His best paintings in oil include *Horses, Roses,* and *Doongas at Habba Kadal* (1975). *Horses* was gifted by Suraj to Muzaffar Ali, the noted filmmaker. Suraj made a number of paintings of *Horses.* Its first one was done by him in 1965 and is preserved in the archives of Cultural Academy. *Roses* was presented by Tiku to Dr. Naseer. On seeing this beautiful painting Dr. Naseer got up from his seat in appreciation.

Many of Suraj Tiku's paintings are in collections of J&K Cultural Academy and other art galleries of India. His paintings have been displayed in exhibitions held by J&K Cultural Academy and Visionaries



The Jammu and Kashmir
Academy of Art, Culture and Languages,
Jammu.

No: CA-5/43/2504
Dated, 24th March, 1961.

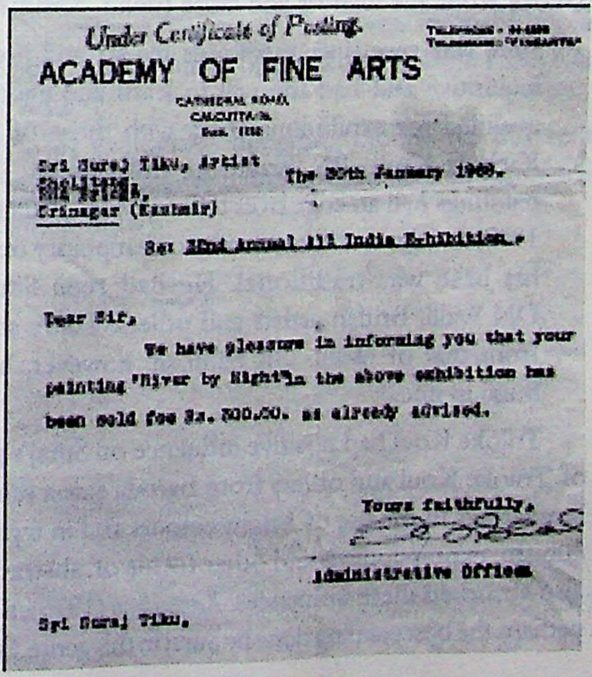
Dear Sir,

The Academy will be glad to buy your painting ent
"In Kashmir" which was selected as an exhibit i
the Art Exhibition, Jammu on the 20th March, 1961. The Aca
offers you Rs. 450/- as the price for it, and will be
obliged if you kindly send us your acceptance telegraphic
so as to reach us by the 30th March, 1961, at the latest.
acceptance received after the date can, I regret to say,
be considered.

Shri Suraj Tiku
Sheli Teng,
2nd Bridge,
Srinagar.

Yours faithfully,

(J. N. Kaul)
Secretary.



Under Certificate of Posting

ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS

CATHEDRAL ROAD,
CALCUTTA-16.
Estd. 1933

Sri Suraj Tiku, Artist
[illegible]
[illegible]
Srinagar (Kashmir)

The 20th January 1969.

Re: 32nd Annual All India Exhibition.

Dear Sir,

We have pleasure in informing you that your painting "River by Night" in the above exhibition has been sold for Rs. 500.00. as already advised.

Yours faithfully,

Administrative Officer

Sri Suraj Tiku.

Group. The latter was launched by artists serving at the Institute of Music and Fine Arts in 1969 with an objective to activate the work of art in Kashmir and hold exhibitions. Its members were Suraj Tiku, Sant Ji Sultan (General Secretary), Triloke Koul, PN Kachru, Gokul Dembi and others. This group held an exhibition in Delhi in which Suraj also participated.

Suraj Tiku's paintings which were awarded are *First Snowfall* (1963-64), *Roses* (1964) *Horses* (1965) and *My Land* (1967). The awards were given by J&K Cultural Academy.

MINIATURE PAINTINGS

Tiku had fascination for Kashmiri miniature paintings. Whenever a miniature painting would come his way he would preserve it in his private collection with great care. Santosh Tiku remarks: "Father did not only appreciate the antiquity and beauty of these paintings but also spoke with great sense of pride that Kashmiris had such remarkable creativity."

OBSERVATIONS

Tiku's contemporaries and juniors had great regard for his artistic work. Triloke Koul, his mentor and close friend, comments:

> Suraj was very sincere towards his art and profession. He was inquisitive and had the will to learn and evolve. His paintings qualified for exhibitions along with those of Som Nath Bhat, Kishori Koul, PN Kachroo and others. Tiku's landscape paintings had an edge over those of DN Walli (particularly after 1949) as Tiku was in tune with contemporary trends in art though his base was traditional. He had seen Sat Lal Kampassi, DN Walli, British artists and others. Tiku's style was different from that of Walli. GR Santosh, however, had an edge over Suraj in line.

Triloke Koul had positive influence on Suraj's pursuit of art. Return of Triloke Koul and others from Baroda saw a renewed interest among local artists in the use of bright colours and in trying new art forms like cubism, expressionism and other forms of abstract painting. Suraj Tiku also absorbed these influences. *Kanzalvan* (1975), a village near Gurez, is perhaps the best painting done by Suraj in this genre. Suraj's abstract paintings

amply reflect his capacity to adopt new techniques and art forms.Tiku also admired Koul's creativity and had all the appreciation for his struggle to pursue art despite hardships and economic uncertainty.

About Tiku's landscape paintings Gokul Dembi observes:

> Suraj would make beautiful landscape paintings. He would do in watercolours usually and occasionally in oil. The reason was watercolour was fashion of the day in Kashmir. Suraj's landscape paintings were done in a realist way. His watercolours used to be like water where freshness would be preserved. He would do it in traditional way. Suraj did abstract painting also. There was influence of Triloke Koul on him but Tiku's basic concepts remained the same.

Rajinder Tiku, an eminent sculptor, remarks:

> Suraj would treat his work very jovially. His work would exude energy.

ILLUSTRATION WORK

Suraj Tiku would prepare portraits and sketches for *Gaash*, a magazine in Kashmiri, which used to be published by the publication wing of J&K Education Ministry. He would also do illustration work for books brought out by the Education Department. Tiku made title covers for many books including *Shehjar* by Abdul Ahad , *Saya Git* by PN Koul Sayil and *Halas Chu Rotul* by Hari Krishan Kaul.

Tiku used to work for exhibitions designing models for different departments. He helped B.Ed. students in preparing models and designed logos for different institutions.

A CREATIVE SET DESIGNER

Suraj Tiku had no formal training in set designing. He acquired this art by assisting Kashi Nath Bhan. Suraj Tiku was very good at learning and adaptation. Among Kashi Nath Bhan's many students it was only Suraj Tiku who emerged as an outstanding and creative set designer.

Set designing is an art in which the artist creates an illusion. In technique it is quite apart and more difficult than painting. Since the actor has to move, the set designer has to depict the movement. Unlike painting, the task of designing sets is complex and involves many things. Santosh Tiku who learnt set designing from his father remarks:

> Father had great imagination. He successfully designed sets depicting heavenly scenes like nether and showing an alligator emitting fire from mouth. In the designing of sets father would lay stress on three aspects—understanding the situation, focusing on the environment and the background for the play and lastly, recreating the times in which the play was to be situated. I think after Kashi Nath Bhan my father was the best set designer at the provincial level.

Krishen Langoo opines:

> Suraj had tremendous imagination. He once created a square with the help of a small lantern. He was creative. There was no set designer who could match him in creativity. After 1967 Suraj Tiku concentrated mostly on set designing.

Suraj Tiku had many firsts to his credit in the history of set designing in Kashmir. It was he who first showed a river on stage and introduced three dimensional sets, beginning with *Bina Divaron Ke Ghar* (1967).

Moti Lal Kemmu observes:

> Suraj was a good set designer after Kashi Nath Bhan. He made sets for *Bina Divaron Ke Ghar* (A House Without Walls), *Taentkor* and *Tsaya* (Shade).These plays had different sets. It was a difficult job to do. Yet he performed the task so well. Suraj would understand the background to be created and knew theatre very well.

Gokul Dembi says:

> Suraj was a reputed set designer in dramas. Continuous sets were made by him. Set designers of Delhi and other places made great money but Tiku got nothing as he was devoted to theatre. In set designing he was very innovative and also quick in doing it. Set designing never posed any problem for him. He knew the job well and would do all things jovially. During State-sponsored Jashn-e-Bahar Suraj did lot of commercial work. He was a good illustrator and knew graphics, layout, etc. well.

ON Khazanchi, a versatile actor and Suraj Tiku's friend says:

> Suraj was a master of stage technique. In set designing Kashi Nath Bhan was the best and Suraj the next best. Suraj made sets for plays staged in Police Meets and Ram Leelas hosted by Sanatan Dharam Sabha. He would be incharge of the stage management. These sets had also to be executed quickly. One of the sets designed by Suraj Tiku still stands at the Director's office in Song and Drama Division, New Delhi. He was a gifted artist in set designing and adept in tricks of the stage.

TRAINING IN DELHI

Suraj Tiku's great moment came in November, 1966 when he was selected for a two-year training course in set designing by Song and Drama Division. Three other artistes selected for acting, who were Suraj's fellow trainees in Delhi, included ON Khazanchi, Krishen Langoo and ON Raina. Till 1966 theatre in Kashmir was in a sense not strictly professional. The artistes did not know mime and had no state-of-the art knowledge about acting and sets. They used to do acting just by watching others and evolved their own styles.

Selection of these four Kashmiri artistes for two-year professional training was a watershed in the history of Kashmir theatre. These artistes

had a strenuous schedule in Delhi under the country's best artistes. Rama Rao gave them training in acting, set designing, lighting, breathing exercises and gestures. In addition Suraj Tiku had separate training in set designing under HV Sharma, then India's leading set designer. The training was meticulously professional.

It was during this apprenticeship at Delhi that Suraj Tiku caught the eye of the legendary Col. Gupte. The latter was Director of Festival at Delhi. The folk theatre troupes from different parts of India had come to take part in the festival. Kashmiri artistes got an opportunity to work with Shombu Mitra. Visiting down memory lane Krishen Langoo recalls: "Col. Gupte was a strict disciplinarian. He debunked cheap acting. Only Tiku had free access to him. He would often say 'Tiku Ko Bulao' (call Tiku) and order *'Yeh Banana Hai'* (this has to be made). Suraj Tiku was very quick in executing orders."

Col. Gupte had directed *NEFA Ki Sham, Katghar,* and *Kohinoor Ka Lalten.* Original sets for *NEFA Ki Sham* and *Kohinoor Ka Lalten* had been made by HV Sharma, Tiku's guru in Delhi. In remaking of these sets Tiku even excelled his mentor. The sets of *Kohinoor Ka Lalten* made by Tiku were so impressive that one could hardly find any difference between the real Red Fort and the one created by Tiku.

On another occasion Suraj Tiku excelled his mentor Kashi Nath Bhan when he made sets for a 'night scene'. This set became a permanent one and would often be used when the occasion demanded. The set had been originally designed for Natak Vibhag plays under the guidance of Kashi Nath Bhan. Those were difficult times for a set designer. He had to achieve objectives more by his skills and with crude items available for painting.

This 'night scene' curtain showed river bank during night with windows of the houses having multi-coloured glass panes and the light from these getting reflected on to the river waters. When Kashi Nath Bhan saw the set designed by Suraj, his pupil, he brimmed with joy. Patting him in appreciation he told Suraj:"Ab Tum Tayar Ho" (You have now come of age). Recalling this episode Bal Krishen Qasba says: "The basic idea of this set was that of Kashi Nath Bhan. Through the use of glazed paper Suraj made it more beautiful. By playing light effects a superb scene was created."

Suraj Tiku was very original. As an artist he had that rare trait—humility. He appreciated the works of others. On one occasion

Suraj Tiku and his colleagues, during their training in Delhi, were watching a play at the festival. In one of the scenes depicting the sea the particular effect given by the set designer gave the feeling of the sea waves advancing towards the audience. An ascetic was shown praying and trying to put his foot in water. Langoo recalls: "It was for the first time that I had seen such a remarkable scene. Suddenly there was a slap on my cheek. I saw Suraj running out of theatre and re-entering the hall through the rear door. I was at a loss to understand why Suraj behaved like that. He later revealed, 'I was so thrilled to see such a great scene'. Suraj had slapped me in sheer excitement."

LOBO EPISODE

Suraj Tiku's great skills and creativity in set designing have become part of the lore connected with Kashmir's modern theatre. In 1970s, Moti Lal Kemmu's *Tsaya* was to be staged under the direction of Trilok Dass. John Max Lobo, the renowned set designer, had recently joined Doordarshan, Srinagar. He had earlier done make-up for *Adhe Adhurye*. Suraj was to make sets for *Tsaya*. At the last moment Trilok Dass brought Lobo to do the job. Suraj was deeply hurt. He called on Krishen Langoo and said, *"Trath peyi, Triyas rood na yaad"* (I feel let down. Trilok showed this disregard to me by getting Max Lobo).

Langoo tried to calm down Tiku and took him to Nishat Bagh to relax. Suraj was busy those days doing sets for Ram Leela, a job he did without demanding remuneration. We have a different version on Lobo affair from Tiku's family. Suraj had told them that it was on his advice that Trilok had brought in Lobo for making sets for *Tsaya*. Probably, Suraj had lied to his family to convey an impression that his substitution by Lobo was no slight to him.

In *Tsaya* King Avantivarman was to be shown on a snow-covered mountain. An ice cave was to be made of plaster of Paris, with entry and exit points. Lobo came to prepare sets at Kala Kendra premises. The play was to be staged at Tagore Hall the next day. Designing of the cave required good skill. When sets were ready, Lobo found that he had kept no exit point for this.

At 11 0'clock in the night anxious Trilok Dass dropped in at Suraj Tiku's house and begged him to re-make the sets for the play. Suraj was a great man. He kept his hurt feelings aside and carried along with him his son Santosh, Bhushan Lal Bangroo, ON Gursu and Abdul Majid.

Lobo's sets were dismantled. It took Suraj less than three hours to prepare the sets which looked superb by any standard. Poor Lobo had to face the choicest epithets for his blunders. He had no option other than to remain silent. Preparing sets for TV is one thing while designing these for theatre is an altogether different art. Next day, the sets were carried in carts to Tagore Hall and erected well in time. Native genius had triumphed over reputation. Langoo recalls: "He (Suraj) came the following morning to inform me that he had redesigned the sets for *Tsaya.* I made him recollect what I had said to assuage his feelings,'You should not worry.' God was with Suraj Tiku."

SANGAR

In 1980s Krishen Langoo was given an assignment by HMT to stage a ballet *Sangar* in Bangalore. In one of the scenes, Dal Lake with the leaves of the lotus plants, a houseboat, crossing over of a boat and an aerial view of Srinagar city from Shankaracharya Hill were to be shown. Suraj Tiku had accompanied Langoo for designing the sets.

On arrival in Bangalore one day was spent in sightseeing. In the evening Suraj suffered an acute attack of asthma and was choking for breath. Langoo had tense moments as only eight or nine hours were left to complete the job. The brave Suraj assured Langoo that he would be able to do the job well in time. He asked Langoo to fetch some medicines he used to take to ward off the attack.

The following morning Suraj declared he was fit enough to start the work. He went to the market himself to fetch different items needed for the purpose.

Langoo recalls:

> Suraj purchased a net to cover the stage fully. He bought white cloth for he would not waste money. Suraj would always economise unlike the artists of today. He gave directions to the carpenter and the tailor on how to make small pieces to be fixed on the net. A wooden pole was also got. Suraj brushed these small pieces to make them look like lotuses. The set was raised on four pillars. This was all accomplished in three or four hours. The excellent quality of the sets was revealed in the lights. People did not pay much attention to the ballet. They were mesmerised by Suraj's sets, and felt as if they were actually in Kashmir.

Shuhulkul was staged in Govt. Women's College, Amira Kadal. A cabinet minister of some state was the guest of honour. PN Koul Sayil, who was

associated with the play, recalls: "We were to show a *chinar* tree. Many designers made attempts but failed. Finally, we had to call Suraj Tiku. In the set made by Suraj the chinar looked close to the real one."

Rangbulbul, a play written by Sayil and directed by Krishen Langoo, was shown at Tagore Hall. A tree and a Nightingale were to be shown in the background. In this play child artistes were promoted for the first time. Suraj Tiku designed the sets. The tree, the flowers and the bird drawn by him looked life-like.The scene looked as if the flowers and the bird were talking to one another. Suraj's sets were always full of life. The play was much appreciated. Famed DD producer Mohan Swaminatri, who was a part of the audience, later made this production for Doordarshan also.

Another superb set was made by Suraj for *Dana Thar* (Pomegrenate Branch) in 1981-1982. This play, written by Bansi *Nirdosh*, had been alloted simultaneously to two colleges—Govt. Women's College, Nawa Kadal and Govt. Women's College, Amira Kadal. Chief Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and members of a visiting German delegation were Guests of Honour at Govt.Women's College, Amirakadal. The play had a boatman's song in it. Bihari Kak, who acted in the play, recalls:

> First song item in the play was boatman's song. Tiku made such a wonderful set which gave a feeling as if the boat was actually roving in the Dal Lake. Suraj had put polythene sheet all around and green cloth was given movement to deliver light effect. Two people were holding the wing and shuffling the polythene sheet. Girls were singing in the background. This song and the set were adjudged as the best items in the play.

BIRCH ART

Krishen Langoo refers to more instances of Suraj's creativity. Many years back the clay roof of a house in Langoo's neighbourhood at Badiyar was dismantled. Removal of clay yielded a lot of birchbark. Langoo's son would go and pick up pieces of birch. One day Suraj visited Langoo's home and decided to create an artistic work out of these birch pieces. He spread out a plastic sheet. He cut birch leaves into beautiful pieces and fixed these on the plastic sheet with fevicol. Then he drew a boat (behat) in a river. It showed the boatwoman standing on its prow. The reflection of the boat and the boatwoman in the river water was also shown. Next he showed a peasant woman with a coir basket on her head coming out of

the forest and moving towards the boat. Speaking about this Langoo says: "It was a remarkable landscape. I can never forget it."

HERO MACHAMA

In 1990 Suraj got an assignment for making sets for low budget *Hero Machama* written by Pushkar Bhan. Krishen Langoo was the producer and the play was to be shown in nine episodes. The story revolved round Machama, a plebeian and the protagonist of the play. Fortunes take a turn. Machama becomes a mill-owner and turns into a millionaire. The protagonist experiences a dream in which he travels to an alien land whose king has died and the country is in the process of electing the new incumbent to the throne.

In the sets Suraj was to show the palace of 'Sheen Shah' (the King of the Alien land) with people as strange (extraterrestrial) creatures. Suraj was in dilemma as he had to operate on a shoestring budget. He went to the Pandit refugee camp at Nagrota.He engaged the inmates in conversation and slowly won over their confidence. His eyes fell on a small mat of hay. He asked the refugees if they could design flower- like items from hay. Receiving positive reply Suraj took out his sketch-book and asked them to make *Sikandar Choga*. He asked them to make ten or twenty pieces each of different costumes and hay-shoes with long stockings. They prepared *ghagra*, shirts, *massband* and hairlike diamond of hay. The project was executed in ten or twelve days. The total cost entailed was less than one thousand rupees.

Maharaja's fort in Nagrota had been taken on rent for one month for Rs 2000. Suraj Tiku put carpets on wings. Through the camera effect hay displayed golden hue. In the evening small flying insects would touch the electric bulb, produce sound of 'tip' and emit smoke. In camera it was captured as 'fog.' Suraj said it was the scene of heaven. He had completed sets for 'Sheen Shah.' Somehow, the play did not see the light of the day.

WORK

Sets for all Kala Kendra plays were designed and erected by Suraj Tiku. He made sets for more than twenty plays staged by Kala Kendra. Tiku had assisted Kashi Nath Bhan in making sets for Natak Vibhag plays. He assisted Bhan in designing sets for the famous opera *Bombur Ta Yemberzal* in October, 1956. Sets for the famous plays like *Aaram Haram Hai* (1968), *Lol Fun Ta Funkar* (1970), *Graduate Pagal* (1972), *Tsaya* (1978), *Alav* (1979),

Taentkor (1979), *Uljan*, *Takdirsaaz* and *Lalligerat* were made by Suraj Tiku. *Alav* was the Kashmiri rendering of *Jheel Bula Rahi Hai*, a play written by Ali Mohammed Lone. *Takdirsaaz* and *Lalligerat* were also written by the latter, while *Taentkor* was written by Sajood Sailani. In *Graduate Pagal* Suraj's son Santosh not only assisted his father in making sets but also acted for the first time in the play. Suraj's other assistants in this play were Abdul Majid and Bhushan Bangaroo. Sets for *Akanandun*, a play written by Mohammad Subhan Bhagat and staged by Himalaya Theatre, were designed by Suraj Tiku.

Sets for *Tsaya, Alav* and *Taentkor* received awards from J&K Cultural Academy. *Tsaya* was also staged at Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi.

In 1976 Suraj Tiku made sets for Ram Leelas organised by Sanatan Dharam Pratap Sabha at Tagore Hall. He was assisted by Santosh Tiku and Bhushan Bangaroo. According to Santosh: "Ram Leela sets of this quality were not produced anywhere." These Ram Leelas were organised by Bishamber Dass Mangotrian. The direction was given by Kedar Sharma and Om Sharma, and make-up was done by Herday Nath Gurtoo. Suraj also made sets for Cultural Day function of Govt. Medical College, Srinagar in 1976.

For many plays directed by Santosh Tiku, Suraj was the set designer. Suraj Tiku would also help other set designers as and when they needed his assistance. His contemporaries in set designing were Jawahar Lal Wanchoo and Om Prakash Dhar. Incidentally both of them happened to be this writer's teachers at Govt. School, R.N. Mandir, Chotta Bazar.

Suraj Tiku had an opportunity to collaborate in the designing of a tableau (Shalimar Bagh) for J&K Govt. for participation in Republic Day parade. In late 1980s, the filmmaker Muzaffar Ali asked Suraj Tiku to make sets for *Zooni*. Soon after they visited Aharbal falls in Shopian area the turmoil broke out and Suraj Tiku had to flee Kashmir.

Suraj Tiku was an institution builder. He never hesitated in training new generations in art and would give out his best. His illustrious students included Herday Nath Gurtoo (Make-up), Kamal Nain Bhan (Painting), Bhushan Bangaroo (Set designing) and Santosh Tiku (Painting, set designing and acting). Suraj would not only give professional tips regarding acting, theatre and set designing but would also lay emphasis on what should be the feeling on the stage.

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THEATRE — HIS PASSION

Suraj Tiku carved out a niche for himself in the field of painting and set designing. The truth, however, remains that acting was his real passion. It was again the efforts of Kashi Nath Bhan that drew Suraj to theatre. Those were the days when theatre in Kashmir was still in its infancy, with little professionalism involved in it. For many artistes it was a pastime and not full-time pursuit.

Tiku had no formal training in theatre. He acquired theatrical skills through the process of self-learning. Suraj Tiku acted in almost all the plays staged by Natak Vibhag and Kala Kendra under the direction of Kashi Nath Bhan, Madhov Lal Tikoo and Trilok Dass.

SAMAJ SUDHAR PHASE

Natak Vibhag staged plays of Nanna besides *Akanandun*, *Vishwamitr*, *Satraat, Raja Harish Chander*, *Shiv Parvati*, *Satyavan Savitri* and many others. Suraj Tiku's real talent flowered in these plays in which he acted. He played a lead role in *Kashmir Hamara Hai.*

KALA KENDRA YEARS

Suraj Tiku was not among the founders of Kala Kendra since he was actively involved with Natak Vibhag's theatre work. He joined the new outfit only after director Trilok Dass returned from Madras and enrolled himself in Kala Kendra. Suraj was still with Natak Vibhag when Prithviraj Kapoor, the great stage actor, came to Kashmir to lay the foundation stone of Sudhar Samiti's theatre on 9th of October 1952.

Kapoor enacted a soliloquy from *The Merchant of Venice*. Natak Vibhag had hosted a play for the veteran guest actor.

Suraj Tiku's great acting performances came in Kala Kendra plays like *Raksha Bandhan*, *Satyavan Savitri* (1951), *Krishan Janam* (1952), *Aurat* (1953), *Prahlad Bhagat* (1957) *Akh Nar Akh Kotamb* and *Tarqi Ki Rah Par* (1962), *Bina Divaron Ke Ghar* (1967), *Graduate Pagal* (1972), *Taentkor*, *Uljan*, *Satraat*, *Vidhwa* and *Lol Fun Ta Funkar*. After 1968 Suraj concentated mainly on set designing.

Tiku worked with such veteran artistes like Ved Lal Dhar Vakil, Mahender Wali, Madhov Lal Tikoo, Omkar Nath Khazanchi, Laxmi Narain Kaul, Herday Nath Gurtoo, Makhan Lal Saraf (who later founded his own theatre RungManch), Krishen Langoo, Pyare Lal Razdan, Moti Lal Kemmu, Som Nath Sumbly, Girdhari Lal Dass and many others.

ROLE MODELS

Suraj had three role models in his life, Kashi Nath Bhan (direction and stagecraft), Triloke Kaul (painting) and Prithviraj Kapoor (acting). Suraj Tiku was inspired by Prithviraj Kapoor and would recreate him as a Kashmiri Pandit character in Kashmiri Pandit roles.

If Suraj had to choose any one after Prithviraj Kapoor it was Shashi Kapoor. Suraj's friend and the versatile actor ON Khazanchi says:

> In later days when my son took Suraj to watch *Suhag* he appreciated Amitabh Bachchan as well but Prithviraj Kapoor remained the main influence. Suraj's delivery of dialogues was superb. In dialogue delivery he was much like Prithviraj Kapoor and remembered all the dialogues spoken by Kapoor.

Critics rate Suraj Tiku as one of the five best actors of modern Kashmiri theatre alongside Ved Lal Dhar Vakil, Madhov Lal Tikoo, Som Nath Sumbly and Omkar Nath Khazanchi. In many plays Suraj and his illustrious uncle Madhov Lal Tikoo acted together. Suraj had great versatility and could play any role. Yet experts rate Khazanchi superior to Suraj in versatility. Suraj Tiku always wanted a role and would feel upset if denied.Invariably, Suraj would get the best roles in the plays.

Suraj Tiku played the roles of a Pandit with distinguished lineage, moneylender, Kashmiri Pandit official, etc. He loved to do the role of a villain as well. Suraj performed this with great finesse in plays like *Maenziraat*, *Kashmir Hamara Hai* and *Satraat*. As a comedian Suraj was peerless. He acted as a comedian in many plays.

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one hundred and seventynine, dharmatalah street, calcutta 13. Tel 237883
director's residence : 19/1 manoharpukur road, calcutta 29 Tel 461613

Sri Suraj Tiku,
C/o Song and Drama Division
Srinagar

Dear Sir/Madam,

It is in deed a pleasure for us to confirm that you have very kindly agreed to act in both the versions of the film 'MAHJOOR' in the role of Villager.......... As already explained by us and agreed upon by you, but for inclement weather and technical failures, you will be needed for ......4...... shooting days on location and ......1...... shooting days in Calcutta for indoor work. In addition to paying you a total and consolidated honorarium of Rupees Five hundred only ...... for the entire work we shall meet your travelling expenses by 3 tier sleeper and incidental expenses for the journey at the rate of Rupees Ten per day. We shall also provide boarding and lodging at par with other artists in Calcutta and on location away from Srinagar. As for the mode of payment half the amount will be paid on completion of your location shooting and the balance on completion of indoor work in Calcutta. In case of only outdoor/indoor full payment will be made on Completion of your work.

We are most grateful to you for your kind acceptance of the offer and for your assurances of total co-operation in this venture for a cause that is Kashmir. We request you to very kindly record your acceptance on the body of the copy of this letter enclosed herewith. The dates of your shooting will be intimated to you in due course.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

DIRECTOR

BEST ROLE

Opinions are, however, divided on Suraj's all-time best role in acting. Bal Krishan Qasba rates Suraj's role as comedian in *Satyavan Savitri* as the most outstanding one. Krishen Langoo regards Suraj's role as daughter-in-law's father in *Satraat* as the best. He recalls,"In those days Tiku was quite handsome and had curly hair before turning bald in later years. As a ten-year-old boy I had gone to watch the play *Satraat* at Sheetalnath with my neighbour, Mahendra Wali, who was himself an actor. The play castigated dowry as a social evil. As daughter-in-law's father Suraj had dressed himself in an achkan and churidar pyjamas. Suraj's superb acting created a lasting impression on me. I developed fancy, initially for him and subsequently for theatre."

MK Tiku admires Suraj's role as beggar in the play *Uljan*. This play was staged first at Shivala and later at S. P. College. When MK Tiku asked Suraj the secret behind this great performance Suraj disclosed that for attaining perfection in that role he used to visit *Charas Gali* near Hari Singh High Street for hours together to study how beggars behaved.

Moti Lal Kemmu describes Suraj's role as *Sarvajana Mitr* in his play *Tsaya* as his best performance. Kemmu says," Suraj himself admitted that he enjoyed playing this role as it befitted his character. This role had to be created because there was no ideal he could imitate." Sarvajana Mitr, who represents the people, is a historical figure, an outstanding scholar brought to Kashmir from Taxila University by King Lalitaditya. Kemmu even goes to the extent of pronouncing that Trilok Dass owed his success primarily to the team which included Suraj Tiku.They would assemble at Chotta Bazaar and invariably spend their evenings together.

Since Suraj was a versatile actor he was an asset to the organisation he was associated with. Once Song and Drama Division staged a play *Desh Hamara Hai* at Mattan under the direction of Gulshan Rai Kapoor, a talented actor with excellent voice. ON Raina, who was to do the role of a Maharashtrian, did not turn up. Kapoor was in a fix as Raina's item was third on the agenda. Suraj, who loved to take up challenges, volunteered to do Raina's item. Suraj did his make-up himself. It was somewhat difficult as he had to look like a Maharashtrian. Suraj sang and danced with gay abandon. Nobody could make out that Suraj was not a Maharashtrian. Gulshan Rai was so amused that tears rolled down his

eyes as he burst into a peal of laughter.

ON Khazanchi describes Suraj Tiku as an artiste and actor of great calibre. He says:

> I have never seen such outstanding talent. He would assist us in script and dialogue writing. Suraj knew the tricks of the stage and theatre. When an actor faltered in dialogue delivery Suraj knew how to cover this up, without the audience getting even remotely conscious about it.

Kemmu is equally effusive in his praise of Suraj Tiku. He observes:

> Suraj Tiku was a talented artiste. He would set the audience thinking in understanding the satirical element in his dialogues. Suraj learnt acting from Parsi theatre which he used to attend. In acting he equalled Madhov Lal Tikoo. He was among the top five actors of his time. Suraj was proficient in Kashmiri as well as Urdu. He had a good voice and flexibility in his body. He would understand the assigned role and then try to create and perform it equally well. His delivery of dialogues particularly in *Taentkor* and *Tsaya* was very good.

Tiku acted in radio dramas and TV plays including *Simon's Papa*. He acted in the two movies *Maenziraat* (produced by Prabhat Films) and *Shair-e-Kashmir Mehjoor* (in both the Kashmiri and Hindi versions). In Delhi, Tiku along with Krishen Langoo, Ali Mohammed Rah and Ali Mohammed Nishtar had a brief role in *Dr. Radio* produced by Vilayat Jafri. Suraj Tiku toured different parts of the state and the country and gave performances.

MAKE-UP

Suraj's brilliance would come to fore in the art of make-up as well. He would perform this job for his theatre and the plays organized by the Police Meet. Later, he trained Herday Nath Gurtoo who equally excelled in this job.

GREAT LEARNER

Suraj Tiku had great zeal to learn and improve. He kept himself abreast with the latest trends in set designing and painting. He never missed reading *Screen*, a film journal, to keep himself informed about what was going in the film world.

At Kala Kendra he would have hair-splitting discussions with his artiste colleagues. Chaman Lal Churangoo recalls on a nostalgic note:

> Suraj was very intelligent and had great insight into the scope of a play. Since I was the secretary of the organisation he would sit for hours with me to discuss social, psychological and other aspects of the play.

Santosh Tiku, Suraj's son, recalls the atmosphere at home:

> At home father used to discuss theatre personalities like Ebrahim Alkazi, Prithviraj Kapoor and Balraj Sahni. These discussions would be joined by Madhov Lal Tikoo, his son Tej Tikoo and others. Invariably, these discussions would turn to plays staged by Kala Kendra. Father knew everything about Elkazi's plays. He was a great learner and never hesitated to own his inadequacies. He knew Kashmir's folklore well and harnessed this to add new elements into plays. Father was not a connoisseur of music but listened to it occassionally.

Suraj Tiku had a great sense of history and maintained an archive of theatre material. He was careful not to lend it to others for fear of losing it.

HUMOUR IN SURAJ TIKU

Suraj Tiku's immense popularity rested on many things. He was a talented actor who had acted in almost all the plays staged by Natak Vibhag and Kala Kendra. Theatre was the major source of entertainment those days. Secondly, Suraj was a portrait artist of great calibre. He had made portraits of a good number of people, most of the times without accepting any remuneration. Whenever Suraj was seen in a bazaar or other public places people would talk in hushed tones 'that particular portrait in our home has been made by him.' Suraj also obliged B.Ed. students who often sought his assistance in making models. Eminent authors flocked to him for getting the cover designs for their books drawn by him.

Lastly, Suraj was highly sociable and enjoyed parties. He was admired by his friends for his down-to-earth approach and great human qualities. Suraj's friends came from that group which had love for art and culture. His close associates included well-known artists likeTriloke Koul, Sant Ji Sultan, Gokul Dembi, GR Santosh and Som Nath Bhat. Among stage artistes he had good friendship with Krishen Langoo, ON Khazanchi, Moti Lal Kemmu, Bal Krishan Qasba, HN Gurtoo, Sajood Sailani and Gayoor Hassan. Suraj shared excellent friendship with Ali Mohammad Lone and Prof. TN Ganjoo, a reputed linguist and scholar. Suraj met Triloke Koul in the early sixties and the relationship flowered into abiding friendship. Prior to this Triloke Koul knew Suraj only as a dramatist. Recollecting his days with Suraj, Triloke Koul says: "I always cherished his company."

Gokul Dembi recalls pleasant memories about Suraj:

> Suraj used to keep everybody happy and would always take things in a lighter way. I never found him tense. He used to laugh out his worries. I found solace in his company, particularly when I had some problems. Suraj was an excellent conversationalist and would often cut jokes with his colleagues and friends. Tiku exuded life and had a great sense of humour. We would meet regularly in Visionaries Group and at other places also. Suraj was the finest man in every respect. He would give respect to others and appreciate their work.

Moti Lal Kemmu and Suraj Tiku would meet usually on Sundays to discuss issues linked to theatre. Kemmu comments: "Suraj was a nice person. People loved his friendship and company." In ON Khazanchi's view it was Suraj's behaviour and amiable personality that enchanted others. He says: "His approach was unique. People would never say `no` to him." Chaman Lal Churangoo, a close associate of Suraj from Kala Kendra days, remarks: "Suraj lent colour to the party the way nobody else did. Respect commanded by him transcended generations. Suraj was very friendly with juniors."

Noted sculptor Rajinder Tiku describes Suraj as "sophisticated, jovial and smart. He loved to cut jokes on anything." According to Krishen Langoo,"Suraj was sober who would never be provoked even when it warranted. People paid him less money for his work but he never grumbled."

HUMOUR

Suraj Tiku had a great sense of humour which was invariably spontaneous. He would narrate humorous anecdotes based on his personal experiences with great relish. These became part of the conversation in artistic and theatre circles of Srinagar. Once during an exhibition the State Animal Husbandry Department asked him to draw a dead cow. Suraj drew it wonderfully well but the cow looked alive. Since it did not suit the objective for the exhibition an official of the Department turned the painting upside down. Suraj provoked his friends to laughter by saying, "Even in the upside down position the cow did not look dead."

On another occasion Suraj had been assigned the job of drawing a life-size portrait of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. When his son Santosh

went to father's studio he found the portrait with its face towards the wall. A little perplexed he asked father on this. Suraj replied, "For many days I could not get sleep. In the portrait Sheikh Sahib really looks like a lion."

Suraj smoked heavily. Char Minar cigarettes were his favourite. Even during Ram Leela performances he would smoke whenever the lights were off. Once he was playing the role of Tulsidas. Suraj had lit a cigarette when by mistake lights were switched on. The audience burst into peals of laughter shouting, "Look! Tulsidas is smoking cigarettes." Suraj would regale the parties by narrating such anecdotes.

Radha Krishan Barbooza was a bachelor and resided near Somyar Temple. He usually played female roles and had scripts of all the old plays with him. He was bald but wore a wig. Once while taking a bath in the Jehlum the soap cake slipped down into the river from his slippery head. Suraj Tiku would often tease him by asking, 'Did you find the soap cake?" In *Vitasta*, a non-Kashmiri choreographer was to act as Kamdev. Suraj Tiku had to do the make-up. The choreographer had very dark complexion. Suraj applied a lot of white powder. When the director Pran Kishore was not satisfied Suraj said: "What can I do? It is like drawing a rangoli on mud."

Suraj would use all tricks in his repertoire to save himself from being forced to stop smoking. He suffered from asthma. Heavy smoking further aggravated it. One day he went to consult Dr. Naseer, the noted physician of the town. Suraj was tense fearing that the doctor would ask him to give up smoking. When Dr. Naseer began examining him Suraj intervened to say, "Sir, I have a humble submission. I am an artist by profession and want to paint a portrait of you." Suraj later told Bihari Kak that he wanted to put the doctor on defensive by 'bribing' him the old way. Dr. Naseer was not only a heavy smoker himself but a very compassionate person as well. He asked Suraj to continue smoking but shift to a friendlier brand of filter-tipped cigarettes. Suraj felt relaxed. He took Dr. Naseer's photograph and presented the portrait to him at the next consultation.

Bacchanalian propensities are quite normal to artists and people associated with theatre. Suraj was no exception. He turned his bacchanalian experiences into great fun. His metaphors became popular among painters and theatre artistes. Suraj would not only want such parties to begin early but would also like these to go on endlessly. Whenever he wanted to know the time he would say, 'What does your

enemy (wristwatch) say?' His another metaphor was 'It is too late before the sun goes down.' It was a signal to start the party.

If Suraj was scared of anything it was the dogs. Babapora lane, which led to his house, used to be full of dogs particularly when Suraj returned home late, either because of theatre work or from a party. It was invariably Krishen Langoo's job to escort Suraj back home. On one such occasion Suraj returned home late in an elated mood. As usual Langoo was accompanying him. That day there were not too many dogs in the lane. A pup was taking a nap. In his usual style Suraj told Langoo, *"az chus bah padshah"* (Today I am the King.). Langoo felt a little amused. Suraj came forward, caught hold of the two ears of the sleeping dog and after lifting it up threw it away. Turning to Langoo after pinching his ears (which was his usual habit) Suraj asked him, "*chus na bah padshah* (Am I not the King?")

Suraj's bacchanalian experience once led to a quarrel in the joint family. He returned home late from a party. The heavy booze had caused a bout of vomiting. The stairs made of clay had got drenched with the vomitus. Fearing censure from his wife who would come to know about this in the morning, Suraj took a piece of cloth and cleared the vomitus from the stairs touching his room. Tikus lived in a joint family. The following morning the other ladies in the family had a hot exchange of words with Suraj's wife, accusing her of violating joint family ethos by cleaning selectively only her portion of the staircase. Suraj would often narrate with great relish this experience, which led to a quarrel between wives of cousins.

Speaking about the type of life Suraj and his fellow artists lived Rajinder Tiku comments:

> Suraj Tiku, PN Kachru, Triloke Koul and Ghulam Ahmed—the whole group had a kind of aura around them. They emulated Paris Masters and lived a life-style distinct from others. There was something special about these parties. Morover, Srinagar would provide such an atmosphere.

PHILANTHROPY

Another facet of Suraj Tiku's personality was that he pursued social work and philanthropy even when he could hardly afford. He had acquired this trait from Kashi Nath Bhan and uncle Madhov Lal Tikoo, both of whom were actively involved in the social uplift programme of Sudhar Samiti.

Sant Ji Sultan on Suraj Tiku

"Wayback in 1989 I met Suraj Tiku for the last time in Srinagar and thereafter when I moved over to Jammu I learnt that he was staying with his son at Udhampur. For a couple of years there was no communication between us. Then suddenly came the final parting. The icy claws of cruel death snatched him away from us for ever. It was a great personal loss. He is no longer with us now, but he has left some sweet memories, which I cherish, love and ruminate.

"Suraj Tiku was a multifaceted personality. He was an actor, a painter and a warm -hearted extrovert who liked to laugh, to share jokes and to establish rapport with people quickly at the emotional level.

"My first encounter with Suraj Tiku dates back to late forties. During that period many plays were enacted by various dramatic clubs associated with certain social organisations. The aim was to expose the social evils that ate into the vitals of our society. Plays like *Harishchandra* and *Satyavan Savitri* were also staged. I remember watching *Satyavan Savitri*—a classical tale produced and directed very meticulously. It left a deep impact on the mind of the audience. A sizeable number of spectators had gathered in a small auditorium at Sheetalnath complex. The audience watched a series of tragic situations unfolded in the play. They looked sad and the atmosphere turned grim. There was soon a short break followed by a comic interlude.

"The curtain parted and the play resumed. Just then Tiku made an entry on the stage as a young husband trying to tame his wife—a shrew. He spoke a word or so to the lady, (the role was being played by a young man) and she shot back in cold sarcastic note that was quite defiant. Agitated as he seemed, he burst forth into a dogrel to register his complaints against the bad-tempered lady. The situation turned extremely funny. There was a commotion, the audience burst into a peal of laughter and this was followed by a loud applause.

"Here was the person, who would be a good friend and companion in the years to come.

"Suraj Tiku was a talented person and acting was his forte. In the years that followed he worked successfully in many plays. He was adept in stagecraft, which he had learnt under the able guidance of Kashi Nath Bhan, a well-known art teacher of his time and a theatre personality. In later years Tiku acted in radio plays with great aplomb and made his presence felt as a versatile actor.

"In the early fifties there was a spurt in cultural activities in the valley. Poets, painters, actors, singers and writers gathered under the banner of Cultural Front. Tiku and many of us worked together and exhibited our paintings along with some well- known and senior artists of the state. Henceforth, the art movement became broad-based and continued to flourish under the patronage of senior artists. Many art exhibitions were organised in the valley and all of us including Tiku infallibly participated in them.

"Tiku specialised in landscape and portrait painting. His works commanded respect amongst art lovers and connoisseurs. His lines and colours unfolded a magical energy in the landscapes that depicted his homeland—Kashmir and its environs. He loved Kashmir caringly, genuinely and whole- heartedly. A small landscape presented to me by him many years ago is pregnant with sweet and sad nostalgia.

"Tiku was a delightful company and a very good friend. He was outgoing in nature and radiated an unending zest for life. Whenever I called on him there would always be a warm sincere welcome awaiting me. One comes across such a man in one's life only once."

Part Three

FAMILY OF PERFORMING ARTS—I

MADHOV LAL TIKOO (1917-1998)

Madhov Lal Tikoo was among the best actors of his times and also directed a few plays for Natak Vibhag of Sudhar Samiti. He was brought up by his elder brothers as his father had died quite young. They were keen to send Madhov to college. He graduated from Sri Pratap College with English literature and Persian as subjects.

Having lost close members of his family in the prime of their life, Madhov would often remain depressed. However, in this melancholic life he displayed enough courage to grapple with harsh realities of life.

Madhov was ahead of his times. He did not hesitate to join theatre at a time when this pursuit was steeped in taboo. He was a close friend of Jagar Nath Koul, son of Master Zind Koul, an erudite poet-scholar of his times. Through association with this family Madhov imbibed love of knowledge and commitment to social change in the community. Madhov's initial love affair with theatre began in S.P. College. This institution had a good Amateur Dramatic Club, which turned raw talent of its students into serious professionalism. A college professor who taught him English literature was kind to him in grooming him into a serious actor.

Madhov left acting for some time after college. This was the time when he took up a private job under Jia Lal Shair. Suraj Tiku, who often received scolding from elders in the family for returning home late, motivated uncle Madhov to join Natak Vibhag. Suraj thought that this

would save him from the scolding. Kashi Nath Bhan was already known to the family. Madhov joined Natak Vibhag. With abundance of talent in him Madhov was soon to emerge as the foremost actor of Kashmir's fledgling theatre. He had great regard for Bhan as director and held him in high esteem. Madhov earned praise for his superb acting in plays staged by Natak Vibhag and Kala Kendra.

Madhov used to get good roles in plays. He acted in the plays *Kashmir Hamara Hai, Hyutdyut* (Dahej), *Tapasiya, Siva Parvati, Heemal Nagray, Aaram Haram Hai, Krishan Sudama, Akanandun, Habba Khatoon, Prahlad Bhagat, Krishan Janam* and *Satyavan Savitri.*

In *Satraat*, which castigated dowry as a social evil, Madhov played as father of the bride. This role he executed so well that people were left thinking whether such things could be true in real life. Such flashes of brilliance in acting brought him into limelight. In *Satyavan Savitri* he played the role of Mahakala and in *Aaram Haram Hai* that of a blacksmith.

Madhov acted as Lord Siva in *Siva Parvati.* Costume had been designed by ML Kemmu in *Uma Tandav.* One day Madhov came to Kemmu and asked him to lend Siva costume to him. He had been asked by Madhov Punjabi of Sathu to wear this costume again for him. The following day Punjabi was dead.

Girdhari Lal Dass has a different version of this incident. He says that it was Jagan Nath Saqi who was playing Lord Siva. Off the stage Madhov Punjabi said to Saqi, "I have a wish. Will you fulfill it?" Saqi replied, 'May it happen! Tatha Atso.' Madhov Punjabi wished: 'Madhov Punjabi should not be living by the next morning'. Perplexed Saqi asked Punjabi if he could not ask for something better. The following morning Madhov Punjabi was dead.

A similar incident had haunted Kashmir's theatre movement many years back. Madhav Dass had a Hanuman temple at his home where he held *bhajans* on Sundays. During bhajan time one of his friends, Shambhoo Nath Koul, came and prayed 'Shambhoo Nath Koul should not be living by the next morning'. Madhov Dass asked him why he was asking for such a depressing thing. Next morning Koul was dead. His funeral procession was one of the biggest ever seen in those days.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, the then Prime Minister,witnessed Madhav Lal Tikoo's performance in *Hamara Gaon*, directed by Trilok Dass. The Prime Minister was so impressed with his acting that he issued

orders for him to join the State Cooperative Department as an auditor. The same play also fetched him a lead role in the movie *Wahab*. This movie on cooperative movement made by a British team was to be shown in Britain. Madhov also acted in Prabat Mukerji's feature film *Shair-e-Kashmir Mehjoor*. He earned appreciation from Prithviraj Kapoor for his performance in *Hyutdyut*. For this performance he earned the sobriquet 'Prithviraj Kapoor of Kashmir.'

Madhov Lal Tikoo was held in high esteem for his work by fellow artistes. Actor Girdhari Dass describes Madhov as a great artiste outstanding in facial expressions. Krishen Langoo observes:

> Madhov Tiku was a great actor brilliant in playing the roles of a hero and a villain. Once he did the role of Vishwamitr in *Raja Harishchander*. His superb acting made the audience shudder.

Moti Lal Kemmu remarks:

> Madhov was a great actor with wonderful voice as required in Parsi theatre. He was a creative artiste and would probe deep into the sentences and even the words used in the dialogues. He was a good director and adaptor as well. He dubbed and directed Shanta Ram's *Jahez* in Kashmiri very well. Madhov was one of the top five actors of his times.

Bal Krishan Qasba, a fellow artiste singles out Madhov's role in *Habba Khatoon*. He recalls :

> In this play two youths were shown reading English newspapers. Reciting Habba Khatoon's songs in colloquial Kashmiri, Madhov Tikoo bursts into a mischievous laughter to ask them: "Pariv Pariv Wordsworth, Pariv Pariv Shakespeare, Magar Kongtihij nah (Habba Khatoon)" (You read Wordsworth, Shakespeare but have no time to know Habba Khatoon).

Madhov Lal Tikoo was a good scriptwriter as well. *Tapasya* was written by him. Its shows ran for months together. Later, it was staged by Kala Kendra.

Madhov Tikoo was bestowed with Kala Kendra trophy in recognition of his services to Kashmir's theatre movement. As a passionate artiste he believed in perpetuating art. This he did by motivating members of his family and other friends and relatives to join theatre.

Married to Meenawati, Madhov is survived by two sons, Tej and Ashok, and a daughter.

Madhov Lal Tikoo's second and third generations continue to be involved with theatre. His son Tej Kishen has been associated with theatre and cultural activities ever since his school days. Ashok was an ace cricketer in his college days and would play Sitar well. Tej's daughter Shweta has been working as a TV and Radio artiste for the past one decade.

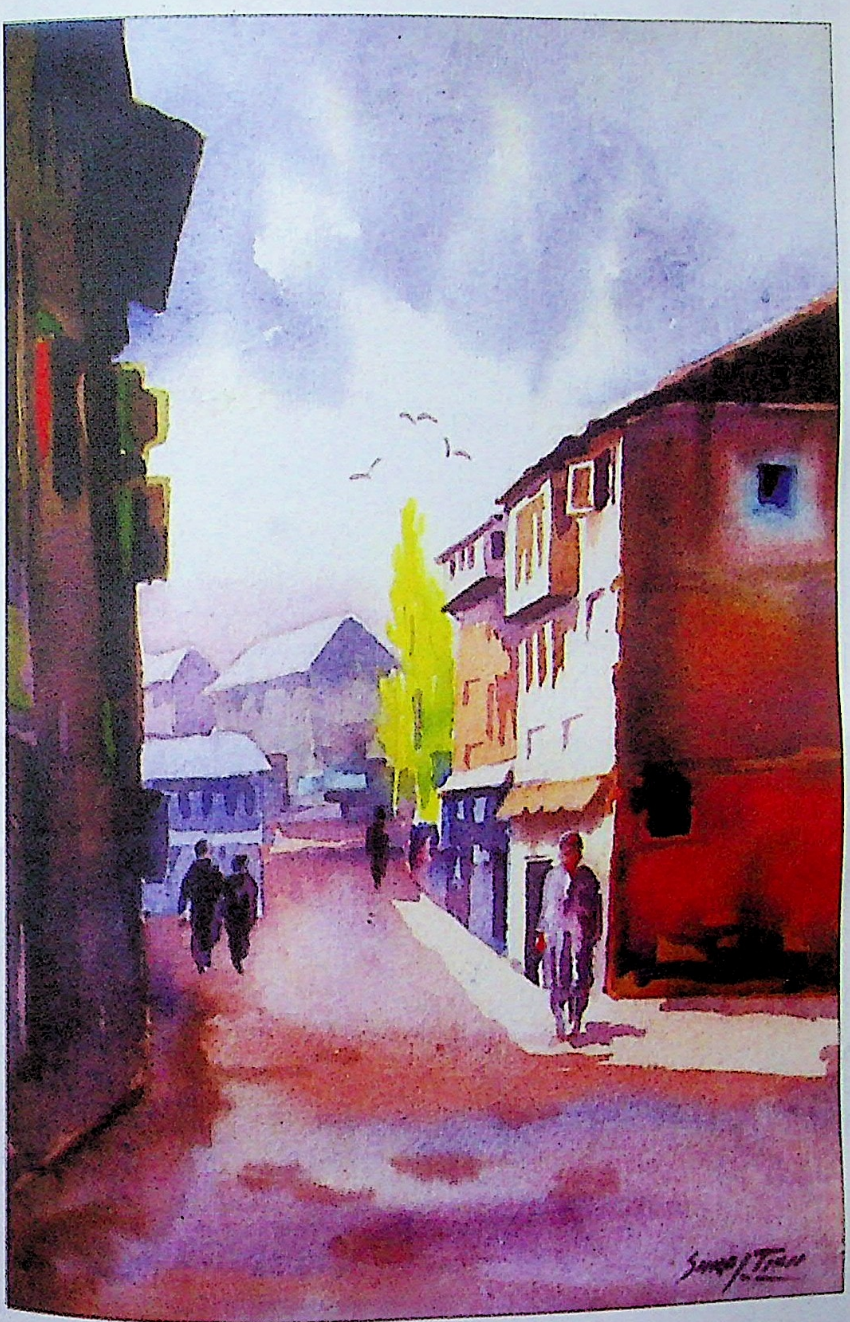
TEJ KISHEN TIKOO

Born on 9th August, 1949 at Srinagar, Tej Kishen Tikoo had his graduation in Arts from the Kashmir University. He is proficient in Kashmiri, Urdu, Hindi and English.

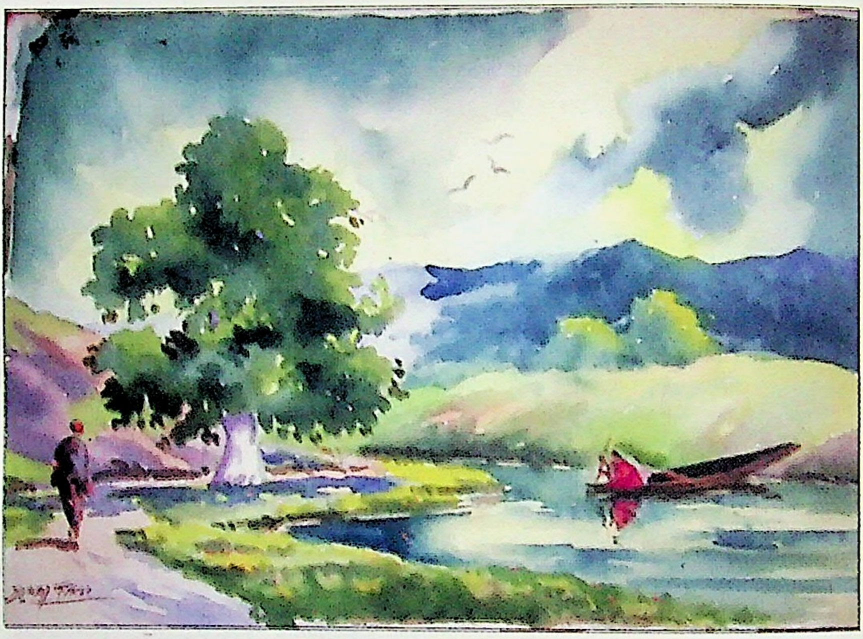
Tej had the right kind of atmosphere to grow up as a talented artiste. His family had great passion for art and culture. He admits that his father Madhov Lal and cousin Suraj, both artistes of great calibre, influenced him to a great extent.

The rich legacy of passion for culture that Tej inherited from his family saw him participating regularly in pageants and other cultural activities of school. Tej participated in Dina Nath Nadim's pageants *Four Seasons of Kashmir* and *School of Tomorrow*, the most successful pageants. He would also participate in functions like Gandhi Jayanti, Children's Day and Jashn-e-Kashmir.

Tej Tikoo joined Kala Kendra in 1969. It was here that Tej had his baptism in theatre. He got a break by working in Baba Dickay's play *Mangoo*, a play selected for J&K Cultural Academy Drama Festival. Tej never looked back and acted in J&K Cultural Academy repeat performance winner plays like *Pagal Koun* (Zahid Hussain), *Waiting for Godot* (Samuel Beckett), *Baqi Itihas* (Badal Sircar), *Evam Inderjeet* (Badal Sircar), *But-ta-Buldozer*, *Panchwan Sawar* (Balraj Pandit) and *Endgame* (Samuel Beckett). Tej also played roles in Mohan Rakesh's play *Ashad Ka Ek Din* and Dr. Dharam Vir Bharti's *Nadi Piyasi Thi*. For his acting in *Pagal Koun, Waiting for Godot, Panchwan Sawar* and *Endgame* Tej was declared the best actor. He played Bhagwan (Gardener) in *But ta Buldozer*, as Mohammad Shafi in *Dastaar* and Ertragaon in *Waiting for Godot*. These were staged by Sangarmaal Theatre of Piyare K. Raina. Tej also acted in *Pagla Goda* written by Badal Sircar, *Surya Ki Antim Kiran Se Surya Ki Pehli Kiran Tak* (Journey Night) and in an opera staged by the Russian artistes in Srinagar.



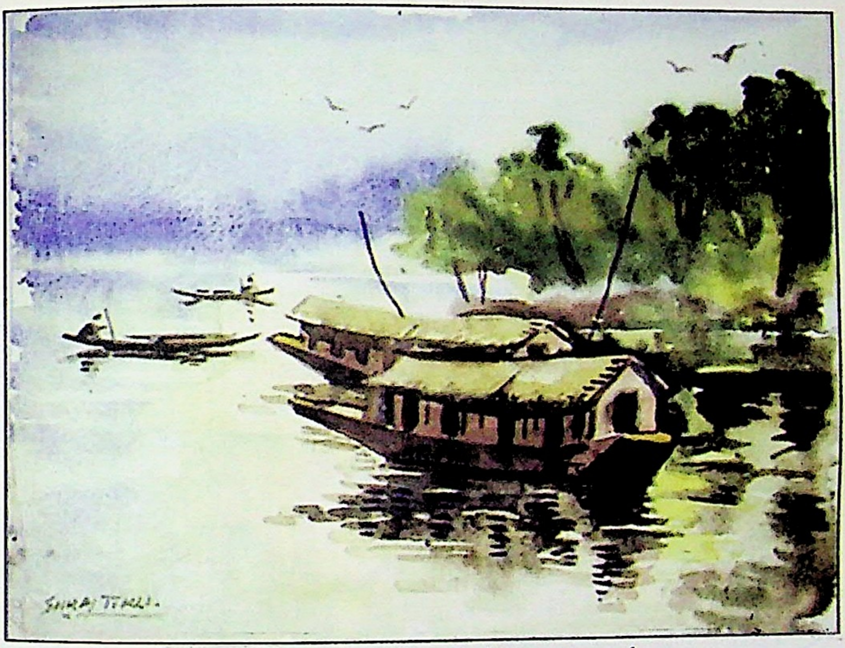
A Srinagar Street After the Rain, watercolour



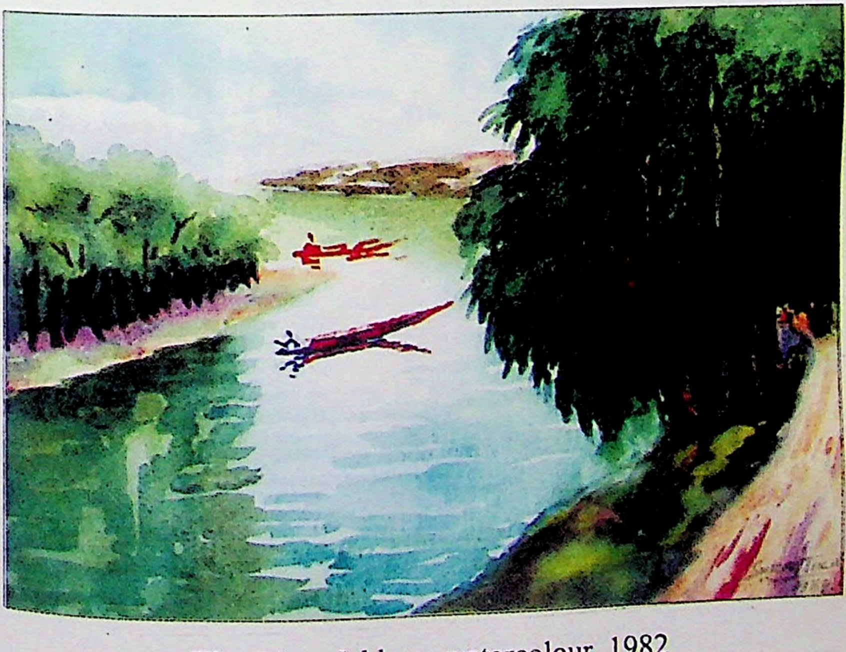
A Chinar by the Backwater, watercolour



Poplars by the Backwater, watercolour



Boats in the Anchar Lake, watercolour



The River Jehlum, watercolour, 1982



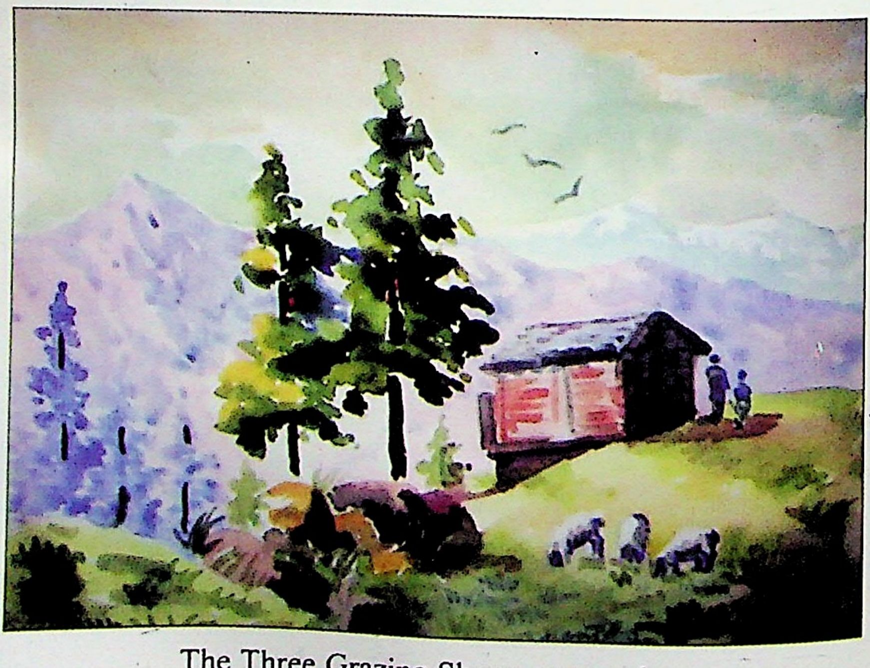
The Storm, watercolour



Landscape, watercolour



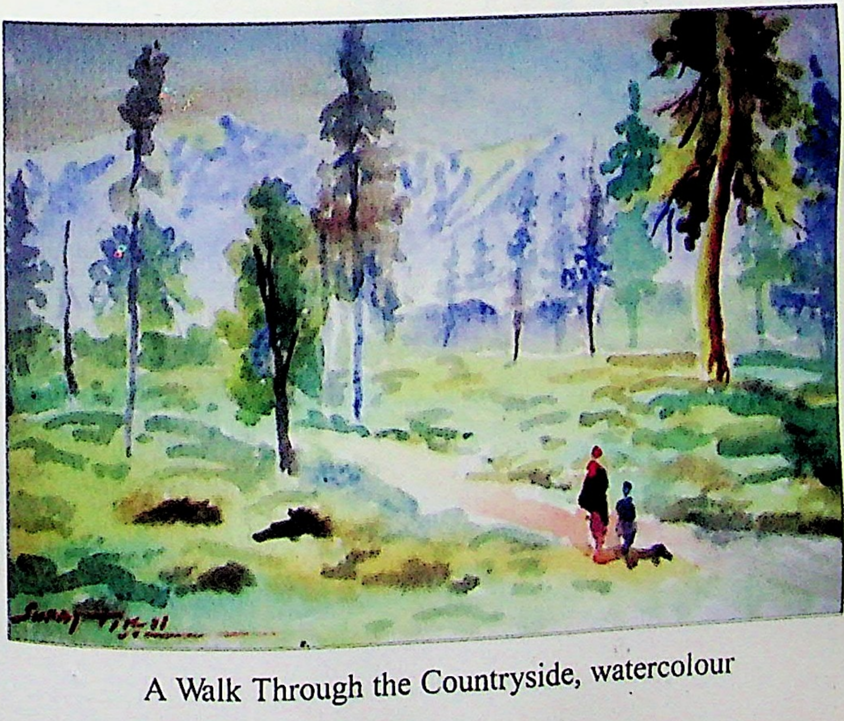
A Boatman Going Home, watercolour



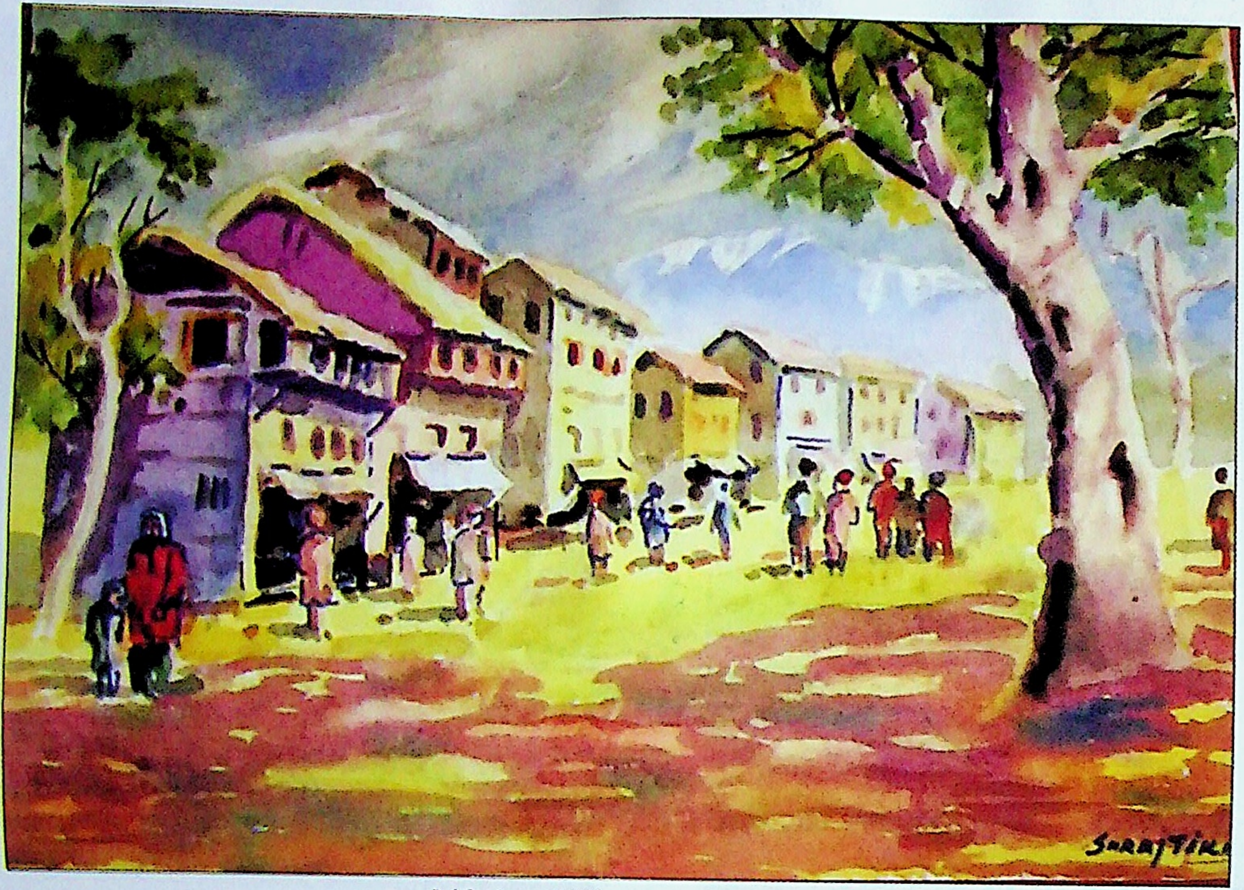
The Three Grazing Sheep, watercolour



A Walk by the Hill, watercolour



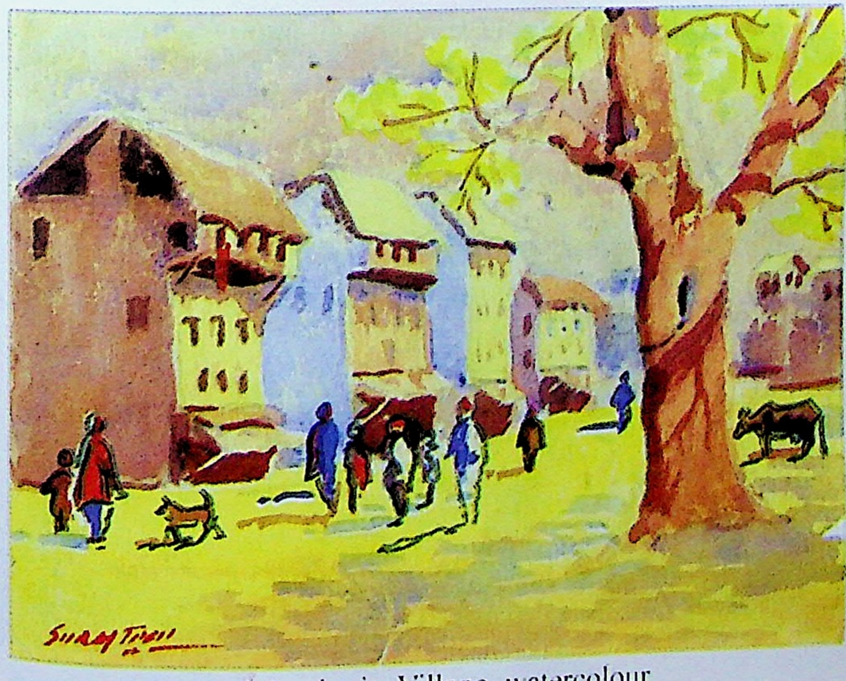
A Walk Through the Countryside, watercolour



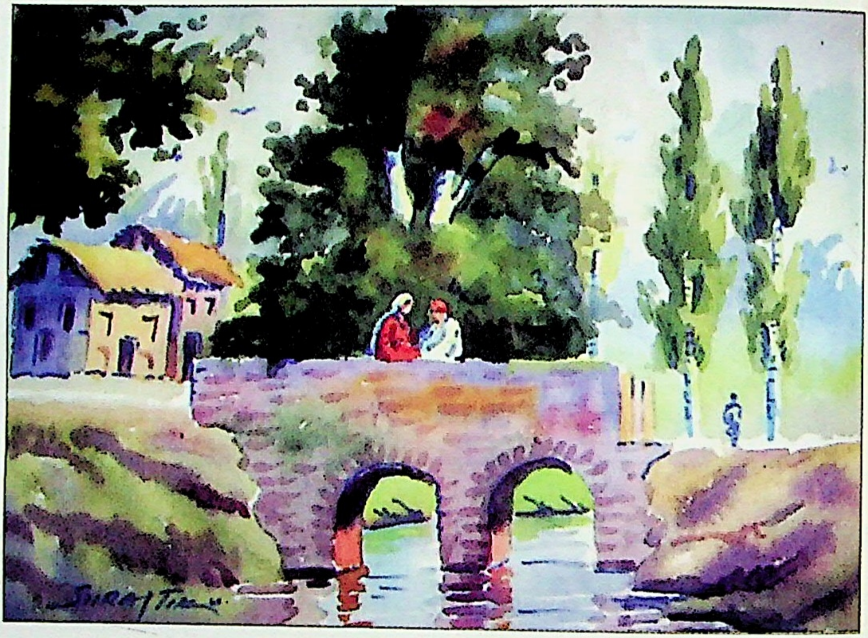
Life in a Village, watercolour



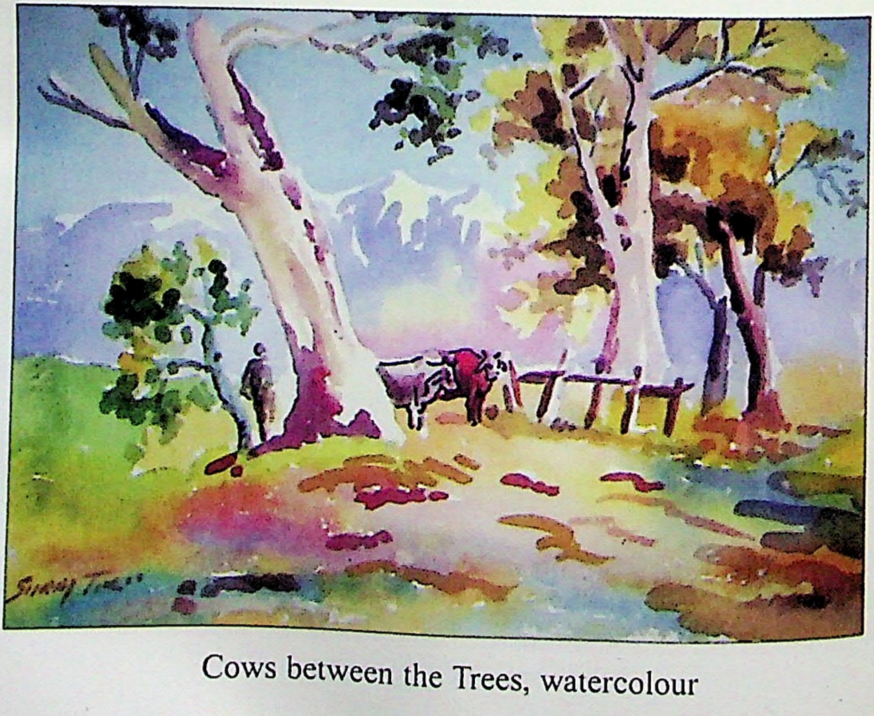
A Peasant House, watercolour



A Kashmiri Village, watercolour



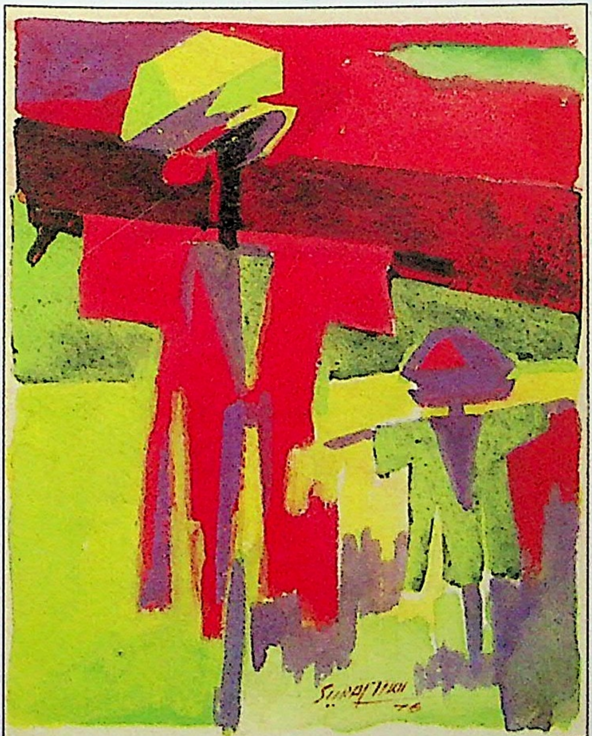
A Private Talk on a Bridge, watercolour



Cows between the Trees, watercolour



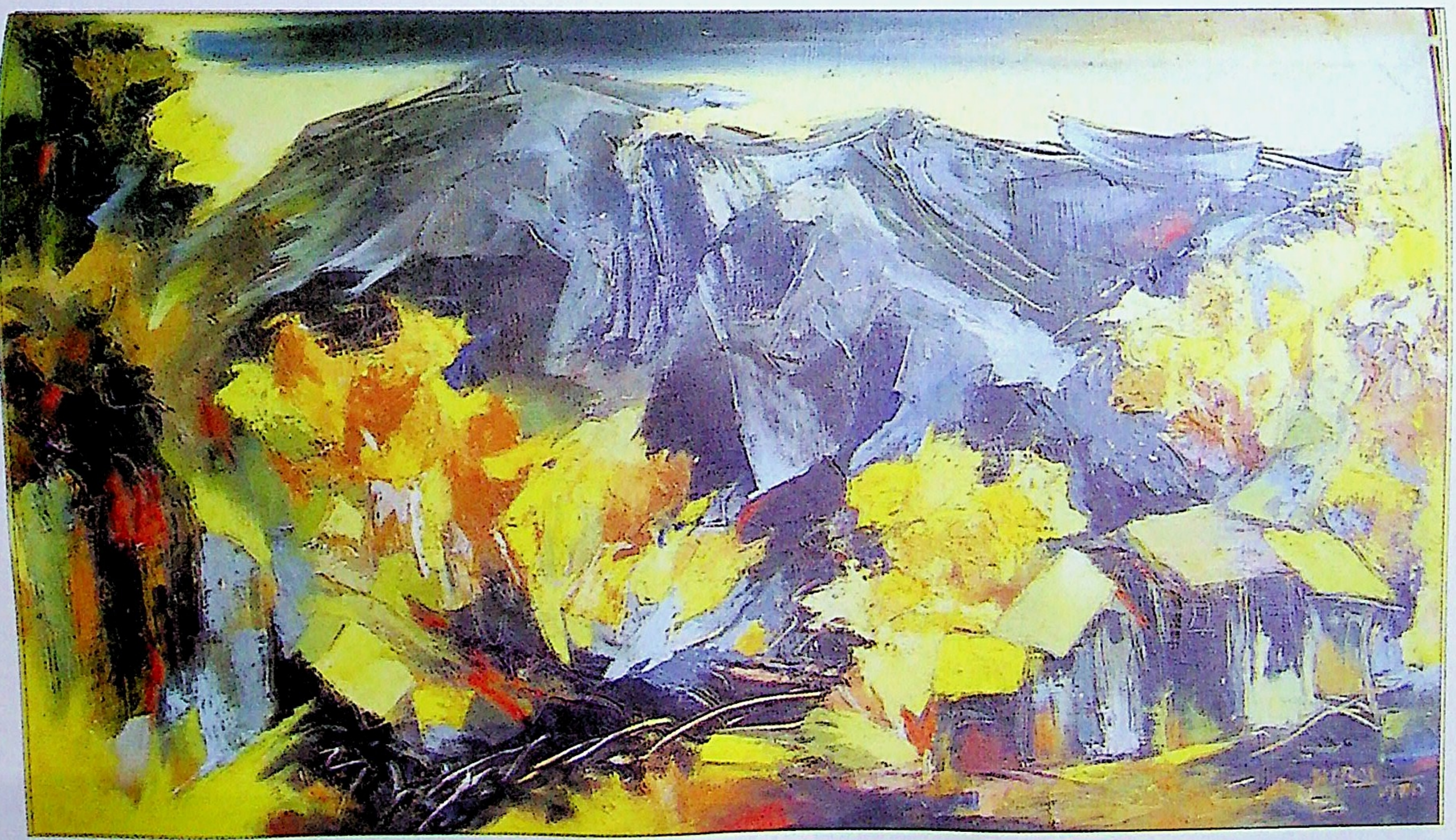
The Mist, watercolour



Scare-crow,
watercolour, 1976



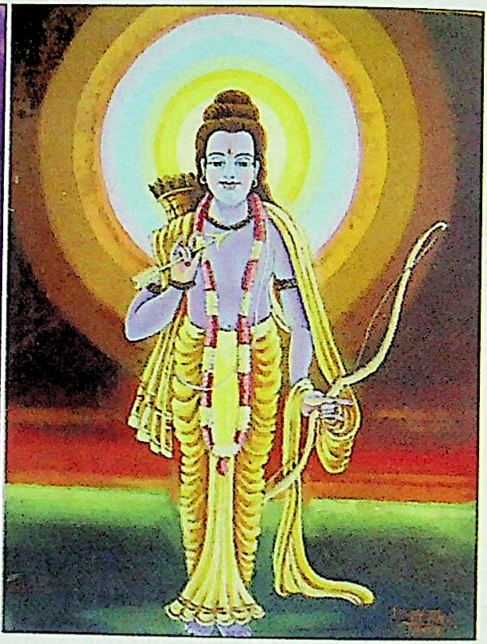
The Horses, Oil on Canvas, 1965



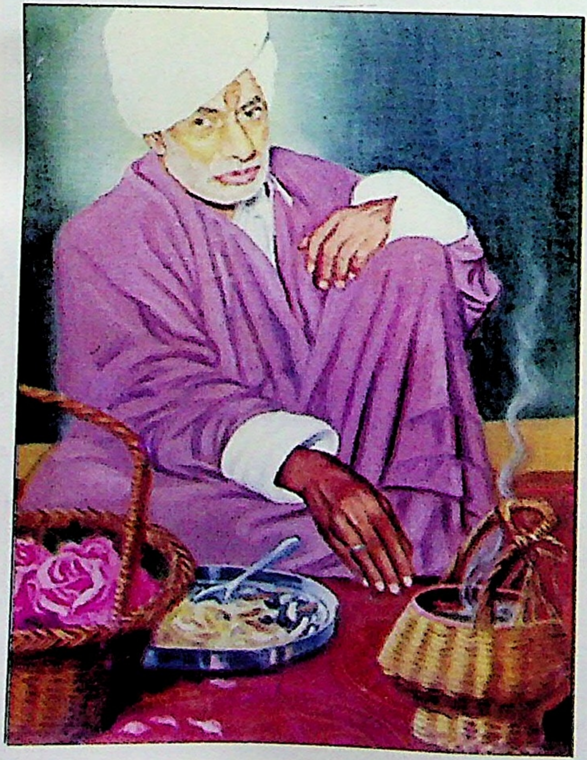
Kanzalvan, Oil on Canvas, 1975



Lord Krishna, Oil on Board, 1948



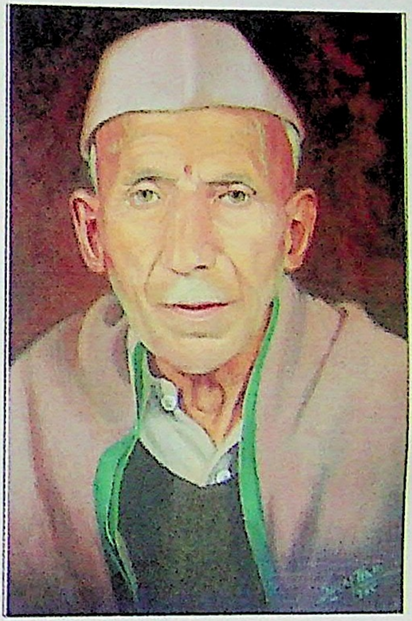
Lord Rama, Oil on Board, 1953



◁ Bhagwan Gopi Nath, Oil on Board, 1983



Optician Amar Nath Kak,
Oil on Board, 1982



Lakhyman Koul,
Oil on Board, 1985



Suraj Tiku's Painting Kit



A Different Land, watercolour

Tej did Kashmir folk theatre under the guidance of Moti Lal Kemmu. He holds Kemmu in great esteem for the services rendered in playwrighting. He has been inspired by Kemmu's masterpieces *Mangay* and *Trunove*.

Tej's big moment came when he was asked to work with a French troupe, Tetram Group (Canada,) in *The Maids* directed by Richard Tremblay.

During 1974-75 Tej Tikoo did a number of radio plays under the direction of well-known radio personalities including Pran Kishore. He participated in some national dramas. His other assignments with radio were— conducting youth programmes for Yuvani, Radio Kashmir. He lent his voice for talk in Kashmiri from Prasar Bharti, New Delhi. In *Jago Grahak Jago* he translated scripts into Kashmiri and participated as Voice.

Tej Tikoo worked as an actor, anchor, writer and translator for various Doordarshan Programmes including children programmes. He acted in the prominent plays telecast by Doordarshan Srinagar—*Pagal Koun, Trunove, Meh More Suh, Somoi, Duchi, Shabrang, Dastaar* and *Aadam Hawa Te Iblis*. At Doordarshan he worked with directors like CL Hakhoo, Ashok Jailkhani, Jai Kishen Zutshi, Zafar Ahmad, Ashraf Sahil, Ashok Vaishnavi, Sarojani Raina and Shanti Veer Koul.

Tej Tikoo has been working for DD Kashir regularly since 2002 in TV serials/Docudramas. Some of the famous serials in which Tej acted include:

Aamatav (a tele-film), Panun ta Parud, Shahid Sherwani, Sarhad, Akh Ose Pohla, Aitbaar, Nazray Nazray, Lal Frosh, Hoshiyar Khabardar, Khushboo, Bandar Ka Panja, Jannat Makani, Chakar-pe-Chakar, Dil Dhoondta Hai, Ham Panchi Ek Dal Kay, Zindgi Zinda Dili Ka Naam Hai, Khoi Hui Jannat, Hausla, Vishwas, Safar Zindgi Ka, Nai Rah, Piyar Ki Goonj, Tehrik Ka Ek Naya Warq, Waadi Ki Aawaz and *Chowk*.

For DD-1 Tej Tikoo acted in the serial *Jazba*. Among notable producers and directors Tej Tikoo has worked with in DD Kashir and DD-1 are Lalit Behl, Ashok Wazirani, Suraj Raina, Rakesh Srivastava, Pranov Chatterji, Pawan Sharma, Arun Gupta, Nanaji Durani, Sandeep Dhar, Salish Sanjiva, Bhupinder Singh, Shiv Ji, Upender Sood, Shalab Srivastava, Ashwani Tikoo and Zubi.

Tej lent voice to a puppet show and a TV serial with different characters. He participated as Voice (dubbing) for national serials-*Gow Daan* and *Sawaser Aata*. He acted in *Sheen,* a feature film produced by Ashok Pandit.

Tej Tiku rates Piyare K. Raina, Moti Lal Kemmu, Trilok Dass, Ashok Jailkhani, Raj Kiran, KK Raina and Zahid Hussain as good directors. He describes Piyare Raina 'as an institution of theatre/films/radio.' Tej remarks, "I have been taught by him the sensitivity in respect of theatre and films and other related subjects. He is one of the directors who raised the standard of Kashmir theatre."

A man of many parts, Tej Tikoo has excelled as writer as well. He has written the scripts and dialogues for a Dutch serial in Kashmiri for DD Srinagar and *Hoshiyar Khabardar*, a serial for DD Kashir produced by Sanjay Tyagi. Tej has translated *Saytoo* and *Kashmir Ki Beti* into Kashmiri. He has also adapted twenty-one stories—film scripts for children for DD Urdu. At present, he is writing scripts of *Aisa Bhi Hota Hai*, an Urdu serial and other comic serials.

ML Kemmu appreciates Tej Tikoo's work by saying: "He does good acting, understands the role and the plays."

What is amazing is that such a talented artiste has done so much for theatre even as a part-time professional. He worked in the Handlooms and Handicrafts Export Organisation of India Ltd. (A Government of India Undertaking), Ministry of Textiles, from where he retired as Manager (Technical). He had a stint of three years at Hamburg in Germany. A widely travelled person Tej has attended many exhibitions at different places. Tej has been associated with prestigious projects involving handknotted carpets. At present, he is working with Cottage Industries Exposition Ltd., New Delhi in the capacity of Customer Relations Executive.

SHWETA TIKOO

Shweta, Tej Tikoo's daughter, had her early schooling from Hamburg in Germany before graduating from Delhi University. She did her B.Tech (computing) from Open University of British Columbia, Canada. Right from her school days Shweta has been actively taking part in the cultural activities and various other stage shows. Besides Hindi and English, she is well versed in Kashmiri and Urdu.

As a television artiste Shweta has worked with some of the good directors. She worked with Dev Tandon in 13-episode serial *Aitbaar* directed by Kaisar Singh, with PC Sareen in the serial *Akh Aus Pohla*, with Lalit Behl in the serial *Aamataav*, with CL Hakhoo in *Kashmiri Album* and with Upendra Sood in the serial *Jazba*. She acted in *Panun ta Parud* directed by Wazirani. Shweta has also worked with Ministries of Social Welfare and Rural Development. She worked for Pulse Media in a puppet show as a dubbing artiste.

Shweta has been working in media since 1998 and has been associated with AIR as a freelance scriptwriter and compéré. Her main focus has been Pakistan and health. She has given voice to many documentary films in English, Hindi, Kashmiri and Urdu. At present, Shweta is working for Sanchar Bharti as a dubbing artiste.

SHRIDHAR TIKOO (1903-1967)

Shridhar Tiku, elder brother of Madhov Lal Tikoo, did a course in fine arts and crafts from Sir Amar Singh Technical Institute. He stood first in the examination conducted by The City and Guilds Institute, London and was awarded a gold medal.

As an artist Shridhar loved to play with colours. He would often visit gardens and meadows to gather images of changing colours and shapes. Shridhar Tikoo worked with Kashi Nath Bhan to help the widows. The two organised a training-cum-production centre for *gabba*-making to help the widows. Besides taking care of gabba design, the two would go from door to door to raise donations to keep this centre going.

Shridhar Tikoo's son ML Tiku besides being an active trade unionist, was closely involved with Progressive Theatre Association (Cultural Congress) in Srinagar. His son Rakesh worked for Radio Kashmir (1979-1984), presenting popular western and classical music. He was the compéré for children's programmes on Doordarshan, Kashmir for a number of years.

FAMILY OF PERFORMING ARTS—II

SANTOSH TIKU

With elders in the family deeply involved in theatre Santosh's fancy for theatre was quite natural. He received early tips about stage-craft and acting from his father Suraj. Santosh was actively involved in cultural activities at school, particularly during annual day functions. He would do skits and also assist Makhan Lal Dhar, a drawing teacher, in art related things.

Born in 1955, Santosh had his early schooling from neighbouring school at Babapora. Later, he joined Kendriya Vidyalaya and DAV School Amira Kadal. He did his graduation from Amar Singh College in 1976, with English literature as one of the subjects. After pursuing postgraduation in English at Kashmir University, for a while he left it to join National Insurance Company in 1981 as Development Officer. He resigned his job in 1990 to set up a Middle School at Reasi.

EARLY THEATRE WORK

To hone the talent of the upcoming junior artistes Kala Kendra set up a wing for them in 1972. Santosh got an opportunity to act in the play *Graduate Pagal*. He played the role of a student Kanta. He also assisted his father in making sets.

This was the time when Kala Kendra was undergoing a crisis, with senior artistes turning indifferent and casual. Many of the artistes were under orders of transfer from their respective departments. Junior artistes

were getting dissatisfied with seniors. Kamal Theatres emerged out of the shadows of Kala Kendra as an amateur theatre group. The idea was floated by Santosh and his colleagues Ghulam Nabi Baba, Rajinder Raina, Ramesh Raina and Suresh Raina. The new club rented a room from Kala Kendra itself at Shivala. Kamal Theatres' first production was *Fundbaaz (Trickster)*, a hilarious comedy. Santosh did set designing for it and acted as Naba, one of the three beggars, the others being Jabbar and Sula. The theme of the play was how normal persons hoodwink society by resorting to begging. One of the beggars was shown as dead and was placed in the coffin. The other two begged to arrange for his funeral. Meanwhile, a trader dealing in chillies happens to pass by. He places a bag of chillies near the coffin. The 'corpse' starts sneezing. The fraud gets exposed. The clique of three beggars had been cheating people by evolving new techniques in the trade.The play was scripted by Sajood Sailani and was staged at Tagore Hall as part of Kashmir Theatre Federation Festival in 1974. In 1976 *Fundbaaz* was staged again at Tagore Hall for Cultural Academy. In this performance Santosh played as Rashid and Pushkar. The play was awarded for both performances.

In 1975 Kamal Theatres staged another play *Apradi Koun* written by Ramesh Mehta. It was the first play for Santosh to direct. He also had the role of Kallicharan in it. The theme revolved round the prevailing caste prejudices in society. It was staged at Tagore Hall. The same year Santosh assisted his father in making sets for Ram Leela, organised by Sanatan Dharma Pratap Sabha. *Roti Aur Beti*, scripted by Ramesh Mehta, was directed by Santosh in 1976. Santosh acted as Mast Ram and also made sets for it. The play focused on a family burdened by economic miseries.

Earlier, Sajood Sailani's *Wutar-e-Bunyal* was staged in 1975 as part of Kashmir Theatre Federation Festival. It bagged an award. The theme of the play was how members of a scavenger family relate to one another. Santosh was its director and set designer. He also acted in it as Sohrab. The play gave repeat performance at the Annual Theatre Day of Kamal Theatres in 1976. Santosh Trophy matches were going on in the nearby Bakshi Stadium. The spectators left the stadium and moved to Tagore Hall to watch the play. Police had to be brought in to control the situation. Santosh assisted his father in making sets during 1976 Cultural Day function at Govt. Medical College, Srinagar.

Dak Ghar, staged in 1977 at Tagore Hall, saw Santosh again as director, set designer and actor (Jaffar). The play, written by Tagore, had been translated by Amin Kamil into Kashmiri. The protagonist of the play is Amal. Due to a physical handicap he is forbidden to move out of his house. He sits on a window and interacts with passers-by—chowkidar, postman, milkman, children, etc. He offers toys to children. The play castigates societal conservatism and compares the diktat given to Amal with the one given to the Hindus who were forbidden to cross the seas.

Santosh made sets and directed *Dastaar* in 1978. He also acted as Mohammad Shafi. The play was scripted by Prof. Hari Krishan Kaul and was staged at Tagore Hall. It was staged at Jammu also where Santosh acted as Ramesh with Tej Tikoo taking up the role of Mohammad Shafi. Tej and Santosh have acted in many plays together.

Dastaar is a comedy which brings to the fore attitudinal divergences between different generations in an office. The Head Clerk, aged 54, flaunts his vast experience as the basis of overconfidence and tries to browbeat his juniors. Finally, he decides to impress upon a young lady typist by recalling days of his youth, regularly shuffling his turban, which he loves more than anything else.

Ali Mohammad Lone's famous play *Jheel Bula Rahi Hai* was translated from Urdu into Kashmiri by Upender Raina and was titled *Alav*. It was staged in 1979. Santosh directed the play and acted as Sadiq. Suraj Tiku made the sets. The story of the play revolves round a fisherman who loses two sons in a storm in the sea and his third son runs away to city. The fisherman calls his son coward. The play starts with a dialogue between the fisherman and his wife, with the latter supporting her son. They engage in bitter polemics.

Santosh acted as a mad man in *Pagal Koun* (1980) written by Zahid Hussain. The play explores the link between dehumanising industrialisation and the alienation caused by it. This in turn leads to strong feelings of persecution among the marginalised. The play puts to debate: 'Are the people who are dubbed lunatics really so?' In 1980 Sangarmaal Theatre and Kamal Theatres jointly staged three plays at Abhinav Theatre, Jammu—*Bu Ta Buldozer*, *Dastaar* and *Pagal Kaun*. In *Bu Ta Buldozer* Santosh acted as secretary of a committee. *Pagal Koun* was also staged at Allahabad during 18th All India Short Play Competition in 1985. Santosh directed the play and also acted as a mad man. This competition was organised by Allahabad Natya Sangh. Santosh had earlier participated in two plays at

Allahabad. In 1986 he directed *Dastaar.* He acted in ML Kemmu's play *Trunove.*

In 1983 Kamal Theatres staged *Theakri.* The play was written by Sajood Sailani and was directed by Santosh Tiku. The play focuses on the plight of a gypsy girl who has been sold to someone by her father. Santosh acted in a few TV and radio plays also. He says the stage gives far more satisfaction to the artiste than TV or radio. As playwrights Santosh rates Ali Mohammad Lone, Moti Lal Kemmu, Sajood Sailani and Dr. Sohan Koul as the best in the genre.

Kamal Theatres organised two major functions in 1979 and 1982 to popularise theatre. In 1979 it collaborated with RungManch and Abhinav Bharti to host Children's Short Play Competition. Eighteen schools participated in it. In 1982 Som Nath Sadhu, veteran broadcaster and nationally acclaimed artiste, was posthumously awarded in recognition of his work. *Hero Machama* written by Pushkar Bhan was staged on the occasion with Santosh playing as Rehman Dada. In 1986 Kamal Theatres presented awards to other talented artistes—Raj Begum, Ghulam Qadir Langoo and Sajood Sailani. At present Santosh guides Sangam Theatre of Reasi.

Santosh has passion for calligraphy and painting. Besides, he has written over four hundred poems and *bhajans.* He is influenced by mysticism and admires Pran Nath Bhat *Garib*, Ahad Zargar and Niyam Sab. His calligraphic work on 'Om' has drawn wide appreciation.

RAVI TIKU

Suraj Tiku's younger son Ravi (born in 1965) has been actively associated with theatre since 1975. He studied at National High School. After graduating in science from S. P. College, Ravi did a Diploma Course in Pharmacy from Jammu. He runs his own coaching institute in Delhi.

Ravi had a break in theatre in 1975 when he found a role as a child artiste (Gula) in *Wutar- e-Bunyal*, a play directed by his brother Santosh. As a child artiste he had the opportunity to act in *Fundbaaz* (1976), *Dak Ghar* (Kashmiri version 1977), *Bas Aakh Khawab* (1977) and *Pagal Koun* (1980). Santosh Tiku directed the TV version of *Dak Ghar* in Kashmiri in 1978. It was produced by Ashok Jailkhani. Ravi played the lead role of Amal in it. During 1981-1982 he again played one of the lead roles in the feature film *Kashmira*, presented by Children Film Society, Bombay. The film was in Urdu and Kashmiri.

During his school years Ravi regularly took part in skits in Hindi as well as Kashmiri during Red Cross Day and annual day functions. He also acted in short Hindi skits telecast on TV—*Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Hem Suka, Buri Adat, Buri Sangat, Jadu Ki Botle, Jangli* and *Aag Ka Drakhat.* He acted as a child artiste in TV plays—*Ghar Mein Ajnabi* (1975), *Ghutan* (1977) and *Padar Sah* (Kashmiri, 1980). Ravi had roles as a child artiste in *Papa Papa* (1975), *Undersecretary* (1978), the 6-episode serial in Kashmiri, and experimental silent documentaries on traffic rules (1977) and Environmental Pollution (TV London, England).

Ravi gave performances on radio in comedy serial *Hanste Hansate* (2000) and Kashmiri plays *Ture Te Sure Dag, Fatik Chander, Budroy, Dastan Katewate And, Treshi Qul, Brande Kane, Don Dilan Darmiya, Noon Te Nabad, Padar Sah, Qasas, Prava, Achno Safar, Athwaas, Gili Ture, Turte Kande, Kahi Khas, Bazigar, Kande Watan Hande,* and *Maye Maze Rahe.*

NOTES AND REFERENCES

CHAPTER 1

PAINTING IN KASHMIR--A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

1. Ray, SC: *Early History and Culture of Kashmir* (N.Delhi: Munshiram Manohar Lal) 1970, pp. 216-17. The artistic style of Harwan tiles (3rd to 6th Century A.D.) displays two features. One, it is totally indigenous, free from the influence of any other known art school. Secondly, it deals purely with the life of man and the nature around.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 218-19: Ushkur art has distinct imprint of second Gandhara School, even though it had definitely developed a sensitive and romantic style of its own. Unlike Harwan the Ushkur art was a religious one and centred round the cult of the Sakya prince. More striking in the Ushkur terracotta busts is the variety of their wonderful facial expression.
3. *Taranatha's History of Buddhism in India*, Translated and edited by Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (N.Delhi: Moti Lal Banarsi Dass Publishers) 1997, p.348.
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   Himalayan Home by Benoy K.Behl, Vol. 25, Issue No: 25, Dec. 6-19, 2008, pp. 66-69.
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13. Srivastava, RP: *Punjab Painting* (Delhi: Abhinav Publications) 1983, p.55. Srivastava in *Art and Archeology of Punjab*, p. 150, writes that Daya Ram Koul *Tota* worked as calligrapher-cum-artist in Kohinoor Press, Lahore. Karuna Goswamy (*Kashmiri Painting*, p. 27) wrongly mentions Daya Ram Tota as son and not as father of Raja Ram Koul Tota.
14. *Ibid*, Goswamy Karuna, p.27.
15. *Ibid*, Srivastava RP: *Punjab Painting...*, p. xix
16. *Ibid*, Goswamy Karuna, pp.149-150.
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25. *Ibid*, '*The Drifting...*', p.1.
26. Interview with Deepak Sapru, son of Jagar Nath Sapru.
27. *The Indian Express*, Delhi, Dec. 9, 1954.
28. Interview with MK Tiku, grandson of Ishwar Dass Tiku.
29. Artist Manohar Kaul's observations at the inaugural function of his Painting Exhibition at New Delhi on March 17, 1998.
30. Kachru PN: *The Modern Art Movement in Kashmir*, Neelamatam, Vol. 2, Issue No:2, November 2004, p.5.
31. *Ibid*, '*The Modern Art...*', p.5.
32. *Ibid*, '*The Modern...*', p. 20.
33. *Ibid*, '*The Modern...*', pp. 15-16.
34. *Ibid*, '*The Modern...*', p. 18.
35. *Marg*, March 1955, Number 2, pp. 105-106.
36. *Ibid*, '*The Modern...*', p. 21.
37. GR Santosh, *ethnic painting*, web article (www.ethnicpaintings.com).
38. *Ibid*, Santosh.
39. Interview with MK Tiku. GR Santosh in conversation with the latter had made these observations.
40. Transforming personal experiences into the language of painting was a dominant theme for Lahore artists, who migrated to India after the partition. One of the most impressive paintings in this genre is *Fate Bound* by Satish Gujral. This work shows three *saari*-clad women almost veiled from head to foot with the folds of the *saari*. The work is in expressionistic mode reflecting the tragedy which Gujral had to go through.

CHAPTER-2

THEATRE IN KASHMIR--A BRIEF HISTORY.

1. *Nadim*, DN: *Growth of Opera in Kashmir* in *The Culture of Kashmir*, edited by SM Iqbal and KL Nirash (New Delhi: Marwah Publications) 1978, p. 128.
2. Kachru, PN: *Modern Cultural Movement in Kashmir* in Neelamatam, Vol. 1 Issue No. 1, June 2008, p.3.
3. *Ibid*, Nadim, p.128.
4. *Ibid*, Nadim, p.129.
5. *Ibid*, Nadim, p. 128.
6. Interviews with Moti Lal Raina and Prof. M.K. Raina.
7. *Ibid*, Nadim, p. 129.
8. Lal (Dass), Girdhari: *Dassu Bhav* in Kashmiri [Faridabad: The Avante Garde] pp. 8-9.
9. Interview with Girdhari Dass.
10. Interview with Girdhari Dass.
11. Aima, Mohan Lal: *Kashmiri Drama* in *The Literary Heritage of Kashmir*, KL Kalla (Delhi: Mittal Publications) 1985, p.118.
12. Interview with CL Churangoo.
13. Interview with ON Khazanchi.
14. *Op. Cit*, Aima, p.118.
15. Interview with Moti Lal Kemmu.
16. Interview with CL Churangoo.
17. *Ibid*, Kachru PN, '*Modern Cultural...*', p.2.
18. *Ibid*, Kachru, pp. 2-3.
19. *Op. Cit*, Aima, p.118.
20. Interview with Moti Lal Kemmu.
21. *Ibid*, Nadim, p.129.
22. *Ibid*, Nadim, p.130.

APPENDIX-I

DIRECTION

Ved Lal Dhar Vakil (Saraswati Dramatic Club)
Kashi Nath Bhan (Natak Vibhag)
Trilok Dass (Kala Kendra)
Makhan Lal Saraf (RungManch/Kashmir Theatre)
Bhushan Betab (NavRang)
Ashok Jailkhani (Vasant Theatre)
Piyare K. Raina (Sangarmaal)
Pran Chandra (Sangam Theatre)
Gauri Shankar Raina (Abhinav Bharti)
Santosh Tiku (Kamal Theatres)
Mubarak Gul (Shah Dramatic Club)
Vijay Khashoo (Pragash Dramatie Club)
Kiran Koul (Kameshwar Kendra)
Bharat Dilber (Novrattan Natsaar)
Kanhaya Qasba (Himalaya Theatre)
Chander Sekhar Raina (Stagecraft)
Moti Lal Kemmu (Abhinav Bharti, Wullar Theatre)
Munshi Ali Mohmmad (Wullar Theatre)
Anil Warikoo (Art Theatre)
Nazir Josh (National Theatre, Budgam)
Firdous Gul (Royal Theatre, Anantnag)
Jawahar Lal Wanchoo (RungManch)
Dr.Sohan Lal Koul (Abhinav Bharti)
Shadi Lal Koul (Kalidass Theatre)
Radha Krishan Braroo (Song & Drama Division)

SET DESIGNING

Shiv Nath Raina (Saraswati Dramatic Club)
Kashi Nath Bhan (Kashmir Theatrical Company, Karan Dramatic Club and Natak Vibhag)
Suraj Tiku (Kala Kendra)
Jawahar Lal Wanchoo (RungManch)
Om Prakash Dhar (NavRang)
Sajood Sailani (Sangam Theatre, Shaheen Theatre)
Gayoor Hassan (Sangam)
Santosh Tiku (Kamal Theatres)
Abdul Rashid (NavRang)
Anil Warikoo and Kapil Warikoo (Art Theatre)
Firdous Gul (Royal Theatre, Anantnag)
Mohammed Ashraf Fida (Shah Dramatic Club)
Omkar Nath Gursu 'Ibn Adam' and Bhushan Bangroo also made sets.

MAKE-UP

Herday Nath Gurtoo (Kala Kendra)
Gayoor Hassan (Sangam Theatre)
Ramesh Raina (Kamal Theatres)
Anil and Kapil Warikoo (Art Theatre)
Jawahar Lal Wanchoo (RungManch)
Om Prakash Dhar (NavRang)
Nissar Badgami (National Theatre, Budgam)
Firdous Gul (Royal Theatre, Anantnag)
Pran Premi (Novrattan Natsaar)
Mohammed Ashraf Fida (Shah Dramatic Club)
Tej Tikoo (Sangarmaal)
Arvind Koul (Kameshwar Kendra)
Ashok Zafrani (VasantTheatre)

LIGHTING EFFECTS

Maheshwar Nath Koul, nicknamed 'Dim', a native of Rainawari, was an expert in handling lights. In 1970s this job was performed equally well by Abdul Ghani.

APPENDIX-II

IMPORTANT PLAYS STAGED BY KALA KENDRA (ESTD. 1950)

1950 - *Tobir-i-Khawab*
- *Soan Gaam* (Our Village)

1951 - *Raksha Bandhan*
- *Satyavan Savitri*

1952 - *Krishan Janam*
1953 - *Aurat*
1954 - *Prahlad Bhagat*
1955 - *Roshni*
1956 - *Habba Khatoon.*
1956 - *Habba Khatoon*
1957 - *Humayun*
1958 - *Chowrahe Par*
1962 - *Akh Nar Akh Kotamb*
1962 - *Taraqi Ki Rah Par*
1965 - *Babu*
1967 - *Bina Divaron Ke Ghar*
1968 - *Aaram Haram Hai*
1969 - *Mangoo*
1970 - *Lol Fun Te Funkar*
1972 - *Graduate Pagal*
1974 - *Taentkor*
1978 - *Tsaya*

IMPORTANT PLAYS STAGED BY ABHINAV BHARTI (ESTD. 1957)

1959 - *Dak Ghar*
1960 - *Qazi Ji*
1961 - *Dak Ghar*
- *Trunove*
- *Manzil Niku*
1974 - *Harishchander*
1974 - *Phir Thur*
1975 - *Mahabharat*
1976 - *Akash Patal*
1977 - *Hero Machama*
1977 - *Gur Buth (Haiwadan)*
1980 - *Lal Bu Drayas Lol Rey*
1983 - *Chakarviyuh*
- *San-31*
- *Doud Te Dagh*
- *Sarkar*
- *Shakespeare*

IMPORTANT PLAYS STAGED BY NAVRANG THEATRE (ESTD. 1964)

1965 - *Bara Gai Yemberzal*
1966 - *Baji Shehnai*
1967 - *Amar Shaheed*
1968 - *Gul Te Khar*
1969 - *Mai Manz Tchay*
1970 - *Beyi Phati Baman*
1971 - *Lalwun Amaar*
1972 - *Lal Bu Drayas Lol Rey*
1973 - *Shuturmurg*
1974 - *Gaeth Laej Aabas Saen Gaye Aavlen*
1975 - *Taimber-Chi-Alav Ti*
1976 - *Bas Akh Khawab*
1978 - *But ta Buldozer*

IMPORTANT PLAYS STAGED BY RUNGMANCH (ESTD. 1967)

1967 - *Grand Rehearsal*
1968 - *Taqdeersaaz*
1969 - *Talash* and *Fundbaaz*
1970 - *Bu Chhus Tchoor*
1971 - *Kus Log Daavas*
1972 - *Insaf*
1973 - *Chapaath*
1973 - *Gatarean*
1974 - *Zalur*
1975 - *Nav Noush*
1975 - *Natuk Kariv Bandh*

PLAYS STAGED BY ROYAL THEATRE, ANANTNAG (ESTD. 1967)

1967 - *Kuruth Khander*
1968 - *Hush Mush*
1969 - *Modern Laila Majnoon*
1970 - *Hasrat*
1971 - *Armaan*
1972 - *Lalawun Naar*
1973 - *Wakhtech Trai*
1974 - *Mudur Zaher*
1975 - *Be-Booj*
1976 - *Lalawun Naar*

PLAYS STAGED BY NATIONAL THEATRE,BUDGAM (ESTD. 1967)

1967 - *Rishwat*
1968 - *Paghech Koor*
1969 - *Anjaam*
1970 - *Gulrez*
1971 - *Intizaar*
1972 - *Pout Aalav*

1973 - *Tim Gori Gai* and *Baman*
1974 - *Adam*
1975 - *Az Te Pa-Khalwaq Shah* and *Milchar*
1976 - *Opera Lol* and *Pragaash*

IMPORTANT PLAYS STAGED BY VASANT THEATRE (ESTD. 1969)

1969 - *Mangay*
1969 - *Magic*
1969 - *Talaash*
1970 - *Mangoo*
1971 - *Vasu Raat*
1972 - *Hatya Ek Aakaar Ki*
1973 - *Rajni Gandha*
1973 - *Mangay* and *Konark*
1974 - *Evam Inderjeet*
1975 - *Panchi Aisay Aatee Hai*
1976 - *Kisi Ek Phool Ka Naam Lo*
1977 - *Chinaar*
1978 - *Gid*
1982 - *Pagla Ghoda*
1984 - *Santola*

PLAYS STAGED BY KAMESHWAR KENDRA (ESTD. 1970)

1970 - *Pazrech Wath*
1971 - *Parvati Mangal*
1972 - *Dovoat*
1972 - *Soan Jawan*
1973 - *Losuvun Doh*
1973 - *Ehsaas*
1974 - *Gati Manz Gaash*
1975 - *Bunyul*
1976 - *Soruy Sapud Raath*

IMPORTANT PLAYS STAGED BY SANGARMAAL THEATRE (ESTD. 1971)

1971 - *Pagal Koun*
1972 - *Baqi Itihas*
1973 - *Waiting for Godot*
1974 - *Nadi Pyasi Thi*
1974 - *Ashad Ka Ek Din*
1975 - *Panchwa Sawaar*
1976 - *Waiting for Godot.*
- *Endgame*
- *Ward Number 6*
- *Natak Kariv Bandh*

PLAYS STAGED BY SANGAM THEATRE (ESTD. 1967)

1970 - *Tamah*
1972 - *Gash-i-Taruk*
1973 - *Zov-Te-Zatuk*
1973 - *Wutar-e-Bunyal*
1974 - *Ropyi Rood*
1975 - *Kaij Raath*
1976 - *Meh Gatchi Nechove*
1977 - *Gash-i-Taruk*
- *Ba Chadath Nae*
- *Shuhul Naar*
- *Kokar Jung*
- *Taentkor*
- *Yatra*
- *Circus Kis Saibaanas Tal*

PLAYS STAGED BY SHAH DRAMATIC CLUB (ESTD. 1971)

1971 - *Kakun Gobur*
1972 - *Insaaf*
1973 - *Nav Rai*

1974 - *Akis Pati Akha*
1974 - *Haram Khanuk Ainah*
1974 - *Hagar Tai Hagar*
1975 - *Doee Kanali Andar*
1976 - *Barh-Gaw-Lol*

PLAYS STAGED BY KAMAL THEATERS (ESTD. 1971)

1974 - *Fundbaaz*
1975 - *Apradhi Koun*
1975 - *Wutar-e-Bunyal*
1976 - *Roti Aur Beti* and *Fundbaaz*
1977 - *Dak Ghar*
1978 - *Dak Ghar*, produced by DD Srinagar
1978 - *Dastaar*
1979 - *Alav*
1979 - Children Short Play Competition in collaboration with RungManch and Abhinav Bharti
1979 - *Trunove*, staged at 12th All India Short Play Competition at Allahabad
1980 - *But Ta Buldozer, Pagal Koun* and *Dastaar*, staged at Abhinav Theatre, Jammu
1981 - *Nadi Pyasi Thi*
1982 - *Hero Machama*, dedicated to Som Nath Sadhu
1983 - *Theakri*, staged at Cultural Festival, Srinagar
1985 - *Pagal Koun*, staged at 18th All India Short Play Competition & Theatre Seminar, Allahabad
1985 - *Juloos*, Written by Badal Sircar
1986 - Presentation of Som Nath SadhuTrophy to Raj Begum, Sajood Sailani and Ghulam Qadir Langoo
1986 - *Dastaar*, staged at 19th All India Short Play Competition & Theatre Seminar, Allahabad
1986 - *Bhoma*, staged at 20th All India Short Play Competition & Theatre Seminar, Allahabad
1986 - *Bhoma*
1987 - *Mojooda Halat Ko Dekhte Huye*, Written by Mrinal Pande
1988 - *Surya Ki Antim Kiran Se Surya Ki Pehli Kiran Tak*, Written by Surinder Verma.

PLAYS STAGED BY PRAGASH DRAMATIC CLUB (ESTD. 1972)

1972 - *Vour Boya*
1973 - *Na Hout Na Lout*
1974 - *Andha Samaj, Ek Aur Dronacharya, Nag Pash*
1975 - *Yeth Naras Kus Kari Chheta, Dulari Bhai*

PLAYS STAGED BY SHAHEEN THEATRES (ESTD. 1972)

1972 - *Aklitawan*
1973 - *Thaph*
1974 - *Jigrook Dod*
1975 - *Gashi-i-Taruk*
1976 - *Lalech* and *Gash-i-Taruk*

PLAYS STAGED BY ART THEATRE (ESTD. 1971)

1971 - *Neeli Jheel, Toofan, Toba Hai Meri*
1972 - *Henruk Kyom*
1973 - *Sadah, Insaf*
1974 - *Pot Bar, Qatal Aki Aakaaruk*
1975 - *College Paather* (in Kashmiri)
1976 - *Kirdar Te Tchai*
1976 - *Film Shooting*
1986 - *Panchwa Sawaar*
1987 - *Good Bye Sivam*

IMPORTANT PLAYS STAGED BY PUNJABI RANGMANCH (ESTD. 1972)

1972 - *Dharti Ki Jai*
- *Planning*
- *Bhai Man Singh*

1973 - *Ratta Salu*
- *Dormitory*

1974 - *Rehearsal*
- *Yojna*
- *Vidyarthi*
- *Parlon ton Pahle*

1975 - *Aadhe Adhure*

PLAYS STAGED BY NOVRATTAN NATSAAR (ESTD. 1973)

1974 - *Lang Lanji*
1974 - *Khangalah*
1975 - *Doib Sund Chalun*
1975 - *Rata Daive Poash,* Written by Mohan Nirash
1976 - *Mitee Ki Khushboo,* Written by Vilayat Jafri
1977 - *Zamana*
1978 - *Sonay Kee Zanjeer*
1978 - *Rakth Kamal*
1980 - *Aandhi Aur Ghar*
1981 - *Baiz Gar, Dulari Bai*
1982 - *Yahoo*
1984 - *Ladai*
1985 - *Kirdaar Ki Pehchan, Ghas Aur Godha*
1987 - *Khoon Ki Aawaz, Paisa Bolta Hai*
1988 - *Undersecretary*

PLAYS STAGED BY HIMALAYA THEATRE (ESTD. 1971)

1974 - *Trunove*
1975 - *Bhagwat Ajukeum*
1976 - *Utsurg* and *Kis-ka-Haath*
- *Akanandun*

KASHMIR THEATRE
(ESTD. 1973)

- *Bus Akh Tamah*
- *Akanandun*
- *Budshah*
- *Dr. Faustus*

KALI DASS DRAMATIC CLUB
(ESTD. 1974)

1974 -*Tasruf*, Written by Amin Shakir
1975 - *Majboor*, Written by Amin Shakir
1976 - *Yi Zanam su Zanam*
1977 - *Tikoon*
1978 - *Cactus*
1979 - *Gruhun*, Written by DK Ganjoo
1980 - *Tratabuzun*
1981 - *Date of Expiry*
1982 - *Local Taxes Extra*
1983 - *Shukriya*
1984 - *Ba Vanha Pouz*
1985 - *Noor-e-khuda*

PLAYS STAGED BY KASHMIR VALLEY THEATRE
(ESTD. 1976)

- *Zalur*, Written by Bashir Dada
- *Manzil Niku*
- *Kani Shechey*
- *Waharatuk Rood*, Written by Jai Krishen Koul Bezaan

STAGECRAFT
(ESTD. 1982)

- *School for wives–Bivyon Kaa Madrasa*
- *Men without Shadow*
- *Amoeba*

WULLAR THEATRE

Wullar Theatre is being run by Munshi Ali Mohammad. Prior to 1947 Munshi's grandfather used to stage *Paather* (Kashmir's folk theatre) in places now in Pakistan. Taak Zainagiri revitalised this theatre in 1968. After being registered in 1969 Wullar Theatre staged *Gosain Paathar*, which was directed by Ravi Kemmu. Wullar Theatre took part in Drama Festival in 1987. It has staged *Manzil Niku, Heemaal Nagray* and *Akanandun*.

Other theatre groups active in 1970s and 1980s include Actors Creative Theatre, Alankaar Theatre, Mamta Theatre, Manoranjan Theatre, Amoeba Theatre, Inderkala Theatre and Mansbal Dramatics.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Colour

Black and White

Prithviraj Kapoor at Shivala, Srinagar. Seen in this photograph are Suraj Tiku (extreme right) and Dr. Gopi Krishan Handoo (3rd from right), President Sudhar Samiti.

51. Dr. Gopi Krishan taking Prithviraj Kapoor on a round of Shivala. Suraj Tiku is seen on extreme left.
52. Sarwanand Gurtoo (2nd from right) being honoured at Kala Kendra function in 1971. Also seen in this photograph is Pran Kishore (extreme right).
53. Madhov Lal Tikoo receiving Kala Kendra Shield from Mohammad Yusuf Taing, while Som Nath Sumbly looks on.
54. Madhov Lal Tikoo speaking at the Kala Kendra Shield ceremony. Seen in this photograph are Makhan Lal Koul (left), Secretary Kashmir Theatre Federation and Pyare Lal Razdan (2nd from left).
55. Madhav Dass
56. Triloke Dass
57. Kedar Dass Sharma coming down from the stage after receiving Kala Kendra Shield. He is being helped by Pran Kishore (left).
58. A view of the audience at the Kala Kendra Shield ceremony. Seen in this photograph is Ali Mohammad Lone (front row, 3rd from right), the noted playwright.
59. 1971: A group photograph of veteran artistes with Kala Kendra staff after the Kala Kendra Shield ceremony:
    Standing Ist Row (L-R): Piyare Lal Razdan, Mohammad Shaban, Madhov Lal Tikoo, Chaman Lal Churangoo, Ghulam Mohammad Qalinbaf, GR Renzu, Dina Nath Nadim, Raj Begum, Mohammad Yusuf Taing, Ved Lal Dhar Vakil, Prem Nath Jattu and Laxmi Narayan Koul
    Standing 2nd row (L-R): Suraj Tiku, Som Nath Sumbly and Trilok Dass.
60. A group photograph of Kala Kendra Artistes at Srinagar (1958). Seen in this photograph are: (Sitting 1st row)- ON Gursu Ibn Adam (extreme left), PL Handoo (2nd from L), Pyare Lal Razdan (extreme right),
    (Sitting 2nd row)- Prana Shangloo (2nd from L), Brijkishori Nakhasi (4th from L), Suraj Tiku (5th from L), Krishen Langoo (6th from L), Trilok Dass (7th from L), Ali Mohmmad Lone (8th from L), Moti Lal Kuchroo (5th from R), Girdhari Dass (3rd from R), Madhov Lal Tikoo (2nd from R) and Som Nath Sumbly (extreme right).
    Standing: Rattan Lal Bhan (7th from L), CL Churangoo (8th from L), Bhushan Lal Bangroo (11th from L), ON Khazanchi (10th from R) and HN Gurtoo (9th from R). (Photo courtesy: PL Handoo)
61. A scene from a Theatre Workshop organized by National School of Drama. Seen in this photograph are Latif Binny, Ravi Kemmu and Asha Zaroo.
62. Kashmir Theatre Federation Festival, 1975, Award winners:
    Standing (L-R): Moti Lal Kharoo, Bharti Zaroo, Sajood Sailani, Som Nath Sumbly, Pushkar Bhan, HN Gurtoo, Pran Kishore, Makhan Lal Koul, Ashok Jailkhani, Veena Gaind and Moti Lal Kuchroo.
    Sitting L-R: Abdul Ghani (Lights), Ravi Tiku and Ashok Zafrani.
63. Artistes pose for a group photograph at the conclusion of the play

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

1.	Santosh Tiku (Suraj Tiku's son)	:	20th May & 12th June, 2007
2.	Girdhari Dass (Stage actor)	:	22nd May, 2007
3.	Ramesh Gurtoo (Herday Nath Gurtoo's son)	:	31st May, 2007
4.	Moti Lal Kemmu (Playwright, Director and Choreographer)	:	20th October, 2007
5.	Krishen Langoo (Musician)	:	9th November, 2007
6.	Chaman Lal Churangoo (Founder Member, Kala Kendra)	:	1st December, 2007
7.	Bansi Lal Dalal (Kashi Nath Bhan's nephew)	:	23 December, 2007
8.	Gokul Dembi (Artist)	:	24th January, 2008
9.	Rajinder Tiku (Sculptor)	:	24th January, 2008
10.	Omkar Nath Khazanchi (Stage Actor)	:	17th February, 2008
11.	Prithvi Nath Koul *Sayil* (Poet)	:	17th February, 2008
12.	Bihari Kak (Stage and TV artiste)	:	20th February, 2008
13.	Triloke Koul (Artist)	:	8th March, 2008
14.	Bal Krishan Koul Qasba (Stage Actor)	:	21st March, 2008
15.	Mohan Krishan Tiku (Trustee Bhagwan Gopi Nath Trust)	:	21st March, 2008
16.	Sham Lal Dhar *Bahaar* (Theatre artiste and poet)	:	23rd March, 2008
17.	Amar Nath Vaishnavi (Drawing Teacher)	:	28th March, 2008
18.	Prof. TK Zadoo (Nilakanth Zadoo's son)	:	16th November, 2008
19.	Deepak Sapru (Jagar Nath Sapru's son)	:	25th November, 2008
20.	Moti Lal Raina and Prof. Maharaj Krishan Raina (Shiv Nath Raina's sons)	:	9th December, 2008

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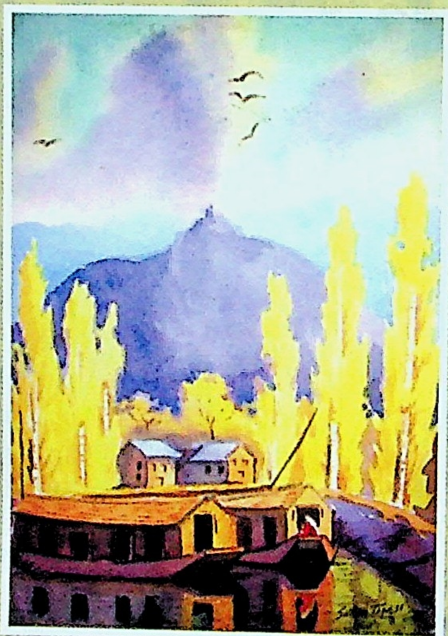
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T

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